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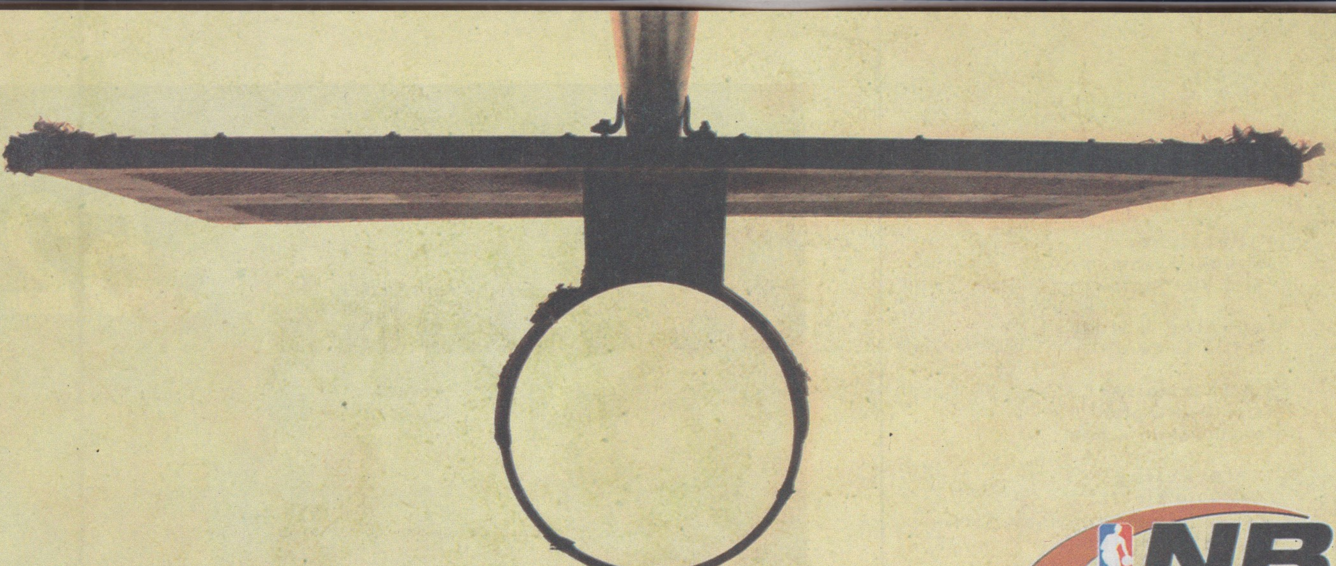

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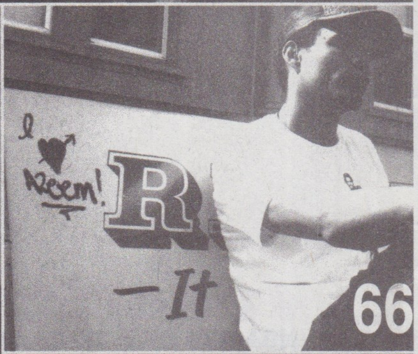

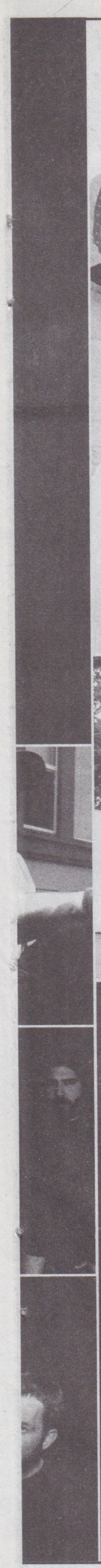

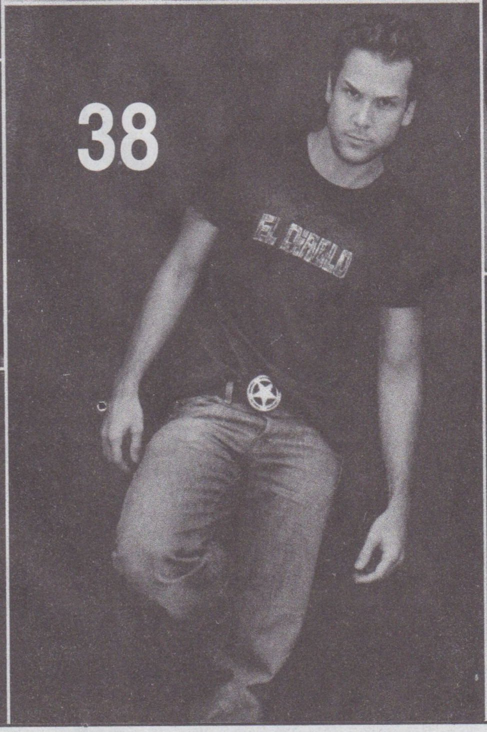

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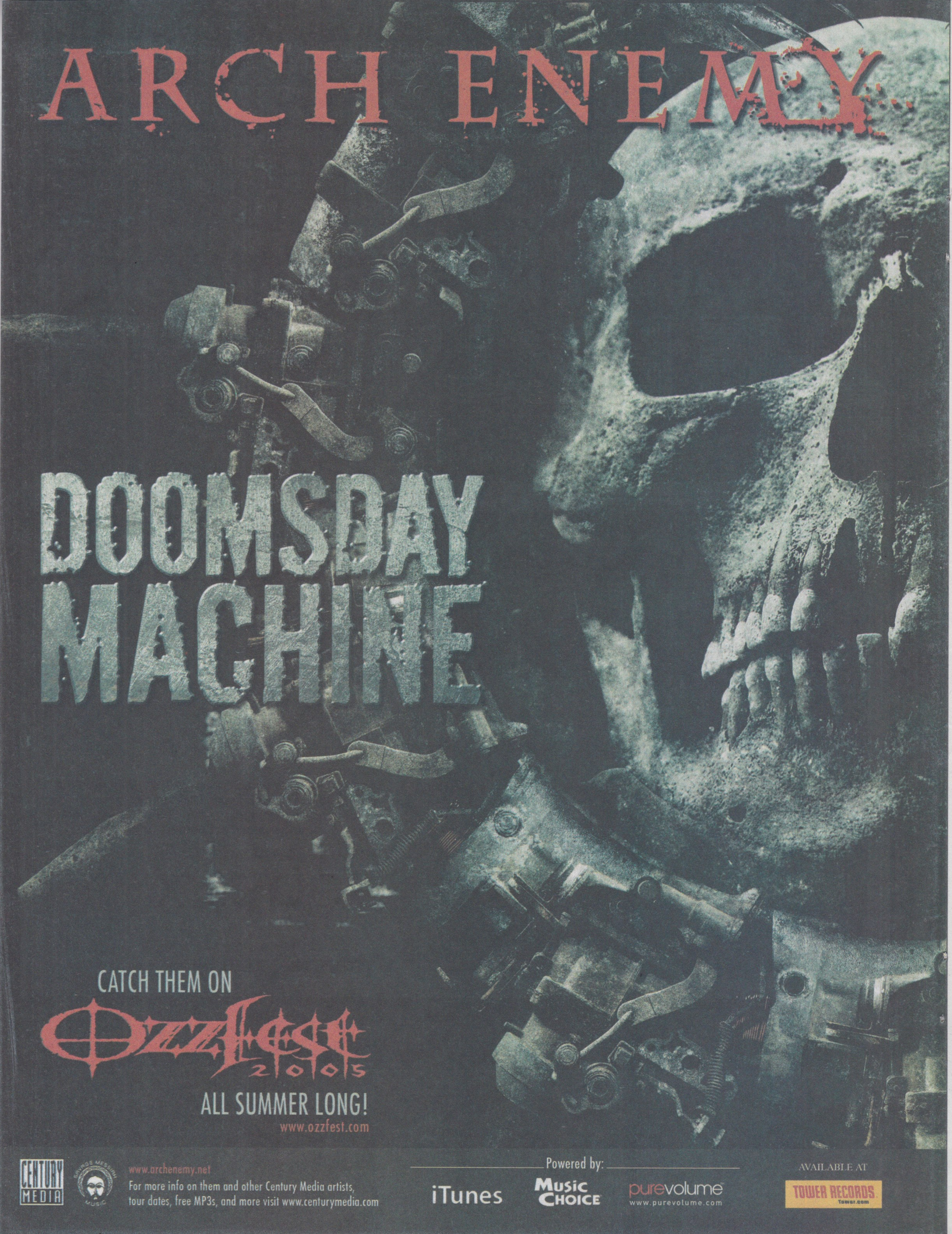
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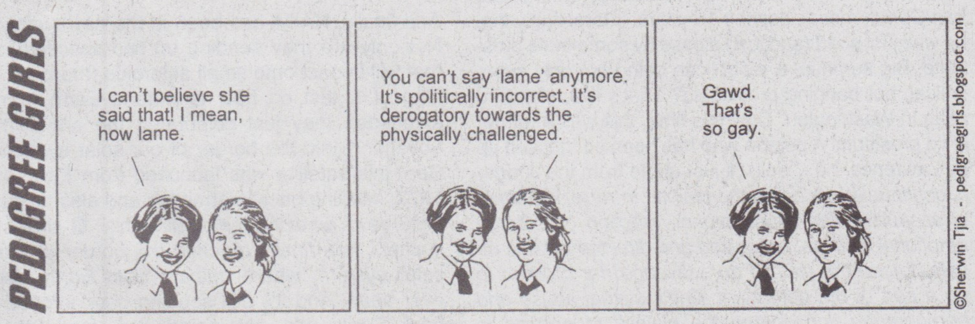
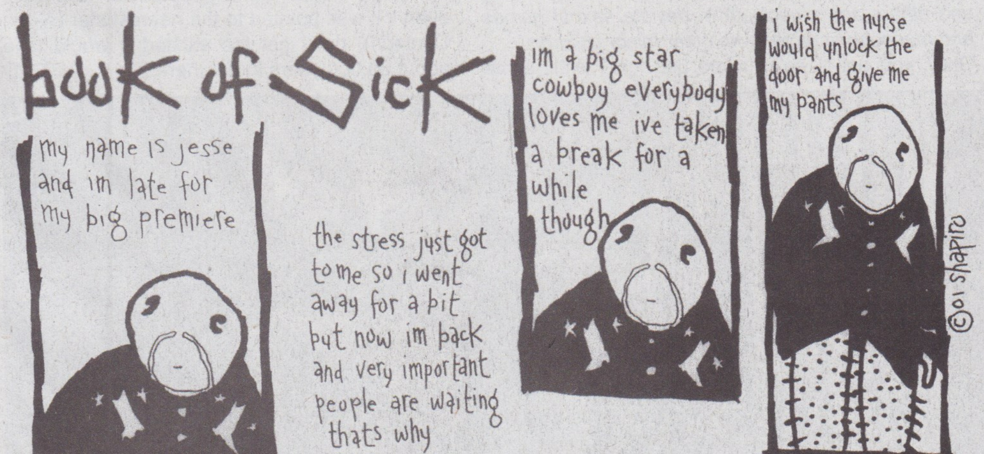
# TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN

BY SHANNON WHEELER





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by PR!

The coders over at SonyxTeam has just released a new piece of software for your **Sony PSP** 1, but it's not a game or an application. Instead, it's a downgrader that takes advantage of a exploit in the PSP's built-in software. What does that mean? A particular buffer can be overloaded, and the early, Japanese bios can be flashed onto the PSP. And why do all this? This older bios allows you to play homebrew (i.e. not official) applications and games with your PSP, something they have since patched in newer models of the console (hence, the SonyxTeam's recent work).

Did you read last month's cover story of Discover? Have you ever even heard of that magazine before? Well anyways, it's a science rag, pretty geeky, but they had a great cover story by Carl Zimmer on **evolution** experiments going on right now. Here's a snippet of the article; buy the magazine or read it online at www.carlzimmer.com/articles/2005/articles_2005_Avida.html

*If you want to find alien life-forms, hold off on booking that trip to the moons of Saturn. You may only need to catch a plane to East Lansing, Michigan.*

*The aliens of East Lansing, Michigan, are not made of carbon and water. They have no DNA. Billions of them are quietly colonizing a cluster of 200 computers in the basement of the Plant and Soil Sciences building at Michigan State University. To peer into their world, however, you have to walk a few blocks west on Wilson Road to the engineering department and visit the Digital Evolution Laboratory. Here you'll find a crew of computer scientists, biologists and even a philosopher or two gazing at computer monitors, watching the evolution of bizarre new life-forms.*

*These are digital organisms - strings of commands - akin to computer viruses. Each organism can produce tens of thousands of copies of itself within a matter of minutes. Unlike computer viruses, they are made up of digital bits that can mutate in much the same way DNA mutates. A software program called Avida allows researchers to track the birth, life, and death of generation after generation of the digital organisms by scanning columns of numbers that pour down a computer screen like waterfalls.*

*After more than a decade of development, Avida's digital organisms are now getting close to fulfilling the definition of biological life. "More and more of the features that biologists have said were necessary for life we can check off," says Robert Pennock, a philosopher at Michigan State and a member of the Avida team. "Does this, does that, does this. Metabolism? Maybe not quite yet, but getting pretty close."*

*One thing the digital organisms do particularly well is evolve." Avida is not a simulation of evolution; it is an instance of it," Pennock says. "All the core parts of the Darwinian process are there. These things replicate, they mutate, they are competing with one another. The very process of natural selection is happening there. If that's central to the definition of life, then these things count."*

*It may seem strange to talk about a chunk of computer code in the same way you talk about a cherry tree or a dolphin. But the more biologists think about life, the more compelling the equation becomes. Computer programs and DNA are both sets of instructions. Computer programs tell a computer how to process information, while DNA instructs a cell how to assemble proteins.*

*A cherry tree absorbs raw materials and turns them into useful things. In goes carbon dioxide, water, and nutrients. Out comes wood, cherries, and toxins to ward off insects. A computer program works the same way. Consider a program that adds two numbers. The numbers go in like carbon dioxide and water, and the sum comes out like a cherry tree.*

Here's a great website to have bookmarked: https://www.quickbase.com/db/bam6rdiey?a=q&qid=8. Lists all the major companies, banks and government office phone lines that are not automated (i.e. **you can speak to a human being**).

Ever hear of Lawrence King? Backed in the '80s, this guy was a big time Republican player, owned a credit union and even appeared on stage to sing the national anthem at the Republican National Conventions. Welps, he's in **prison for fraud** 2(that whole Iran/Contra mess), serving 15 years. Interestingly tho, he was just sued (and lost) a case by some male prostitute. Big surprise, a republican being not only hypocritical, but banging prostitutes? That's like, standard affair in Washington. Only this time, this was a former child prostitute. A person who has been so messed up by Lawrence, he... well, I'll just quote from the Judge: *'...continually subjected the plaintiff to repeated sexual assaults, false imprisonment, infliction of extreme emotional distress, organized and directed satanic rituals, forced the plaintiff to "scavenge" for children to be a part of the defendant King's sexual abuse and pornography ring, forced the plaintiff to engage in numerous sexual contacts with the defendant King and others and participate in deviate sexual games and masochistic orgies with other minor children.'*

Okay, you get it, he's fucked up, right? Well, some people stumbled on a much bigger evil going on, which went towards and right up to the vice president of the time, George Bush. See, Lawerence's credit union was the place a pedophile ring ran out of. This ring served only the most high powered of clients, both figures and officials. Nebraska's state government hired investigator Gary Caradori onto the cash. When he traveled to Chicago to gather evidence, he discovered that not only had the Vice President Bush known about this, quite a few even placed him at the 'sex parties'. You know what's going on there. Hint: not Boggle.

One problem: on the way back, the investigators small plane exploded in mid air, and a witness reported the flash. Later, it was ruled an accident. Big deal right? Shit happens to good people? Well, before he returned, he called Nebraska Senator Loran Schmit with good news. "We've got them! There's no way they can get out of it now!" he said. The senator later told reporters "There were a lot of people in this state who wanted to see Gary dead. They got their wish."

Craig Spence, a Republican lobbyist also was alleged to have run his own high profile political underage prostitution ring. Okay, actually The Washington Times wrote "Spence, according to friends, was also carrying out homosexual blackmail operations for the CIA." Four months after the story broke, Craig was dead in a hotel, his death ruled a suicide. Most of the info was found on these sites (and their news links):
www.indybay.org/news/2003/03/1579613.php
www.tinyurl.com/bxfk8

**Are you scared easily**? Just like to hug people? Then you probably wont want to read *Stranger Than Fiction : An Independent Investigation of 9/11 and the War on Terrorism.* It's actually quite good, free (available on the web via anonymous) and contains links to every single official source. Blow your mind about 3.

And finally, **NASA** has been in the news lately. Not only are they sending up two spacecrafts that will impact onto small asteroids (the beginning of a test on how to defend Earth from asteroids), they just celebrated the arrival of Voyager 1 into the border of our solar system. See, this satellite was launched from Earth in 1977, sending back information and also taking pictures of amazing things (like this 4 shot of Jupiter), has finally reached the border of our solar system, where nothing from Earth has ever been. And it's still sending back information! Sadly, it's not going that fast (only 38,400mph) and in any particular direction; even if it was pointed to the nearest star (Alpha Centauri), don't get too excited: it would take about 80,000 years to get there. END

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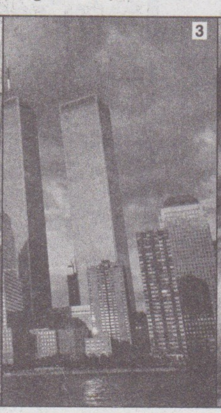

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"Metal has been re-shaped once again. It doesn't drag along, and is in no way boring. Anyone who likes metal would be able to enjoy this." DigitalMetal.com
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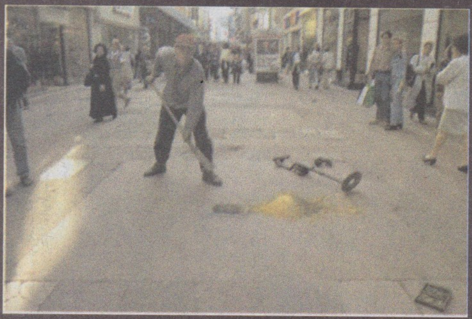
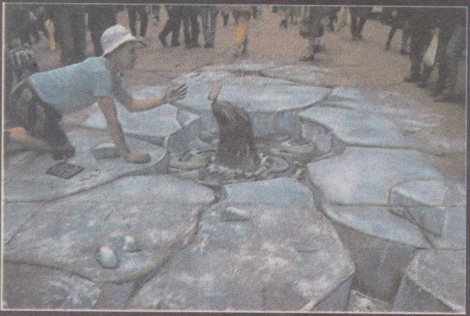
ARTIST MINI-PROFILE:

# Julian Beever

Julian Beever is an artist that has made his illusion / perspective pavement drawings infamous, drawing on public cement in America, the UK, Belgium, France, The Netherlands, Germany and Australia.





# *Moments*

## Special interest

"Excuse me" he said. It was the bloke who'd been creeping around behind me in Woolworths. He had haunted muddy eyes and his breath reeked of curry and tic-tacs. "I was wondering, did you pay for those seeds?" He was right of course. Assorted Summer Blooms, palmed deftly into my secret pocket.

But this guy didn't look like security.

"What seeds?" His eyes darted about. "Can we go for coffee?" His thumb stroked my finger where it rested against my Latte. I didn't move it away.

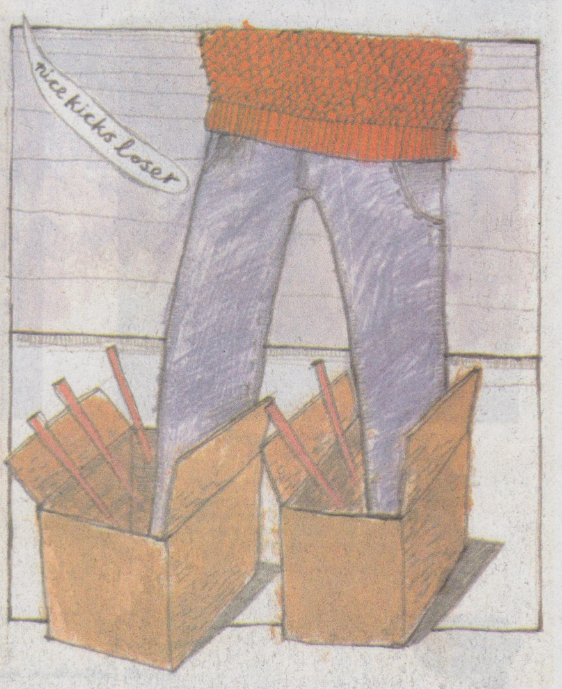
"I have a thing," he said. "For people like you." I felt myself redden. "Like me?" He gripped my finger in his hand. "Women who steal." I pulled my hand away. ""So I'm just another?" "You're special. I bet you don't even have a garden for those seeds."

"One O'clock, B & Q." I called after him. "Nails and fixings."

## New best friend

After the consultant left, Tim called us into his office and handed round a packet of Marlboros. "Take one, light it, and inhale," he said. I immediately had a coughing fit, and Julie was sick in the bin. "I haven't had a fag," she protested, "since I was fourteen." Tim ignored her and prodded on the Powerpoint. Lines of text slid on and off. "Smokers," he said, "change things. Smokers are clued up on office affairs, know what staff think of the company, are less risk averse and more alive to the moment. They're sensualists, pleasure-seekers and," he snapped off the machine, "never defer gratification. Smokers take action so from now on the members of this management team are smokers. Tomorrow we'll look at lighting and holding, disposal of stubs, and when to offer and when to accept. And I have a few things to say about lunchtime drinking."

## Cica lights




Mum and Trevor were getting serious, what with her new glittery top and the way she stroked the sleeve of his knobbly jumper like it was a hamster. But you can put up with that. When he bought me new trainers my heart sank. The box declared in scrolly italics, Clarks, and when I lifted the lid, pink lights winked through tissue and my worst fears were confirmed.

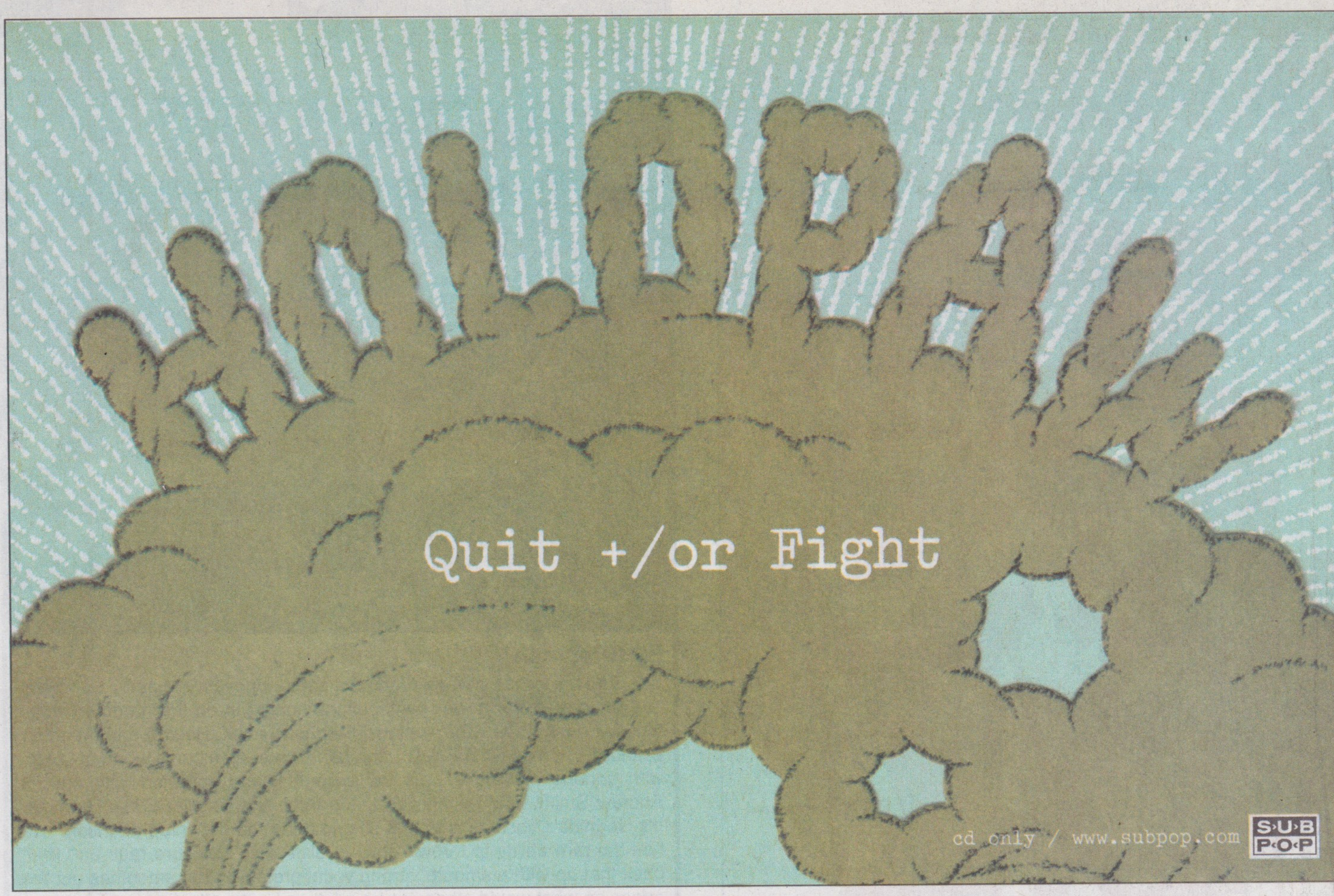
Cica Lights. A Nike copy with pathetic flashing bulbs in the heels.

I was dead if I wore them. Like the boy who wore a Blue Peter t-shirt on non-uniform day and had since developed a stutter and started hanging with the science-fiction lot.

So I told Trevor about the nights my Dad stayed over and Trevor stormed out taking the shoes with him.

My mum was insupportable. But relationships come and go. Your choice of trainer leaves an indelible mark.

*David Gaffney wrote the words, then sent them to Dave Bailey who did the illustrations.*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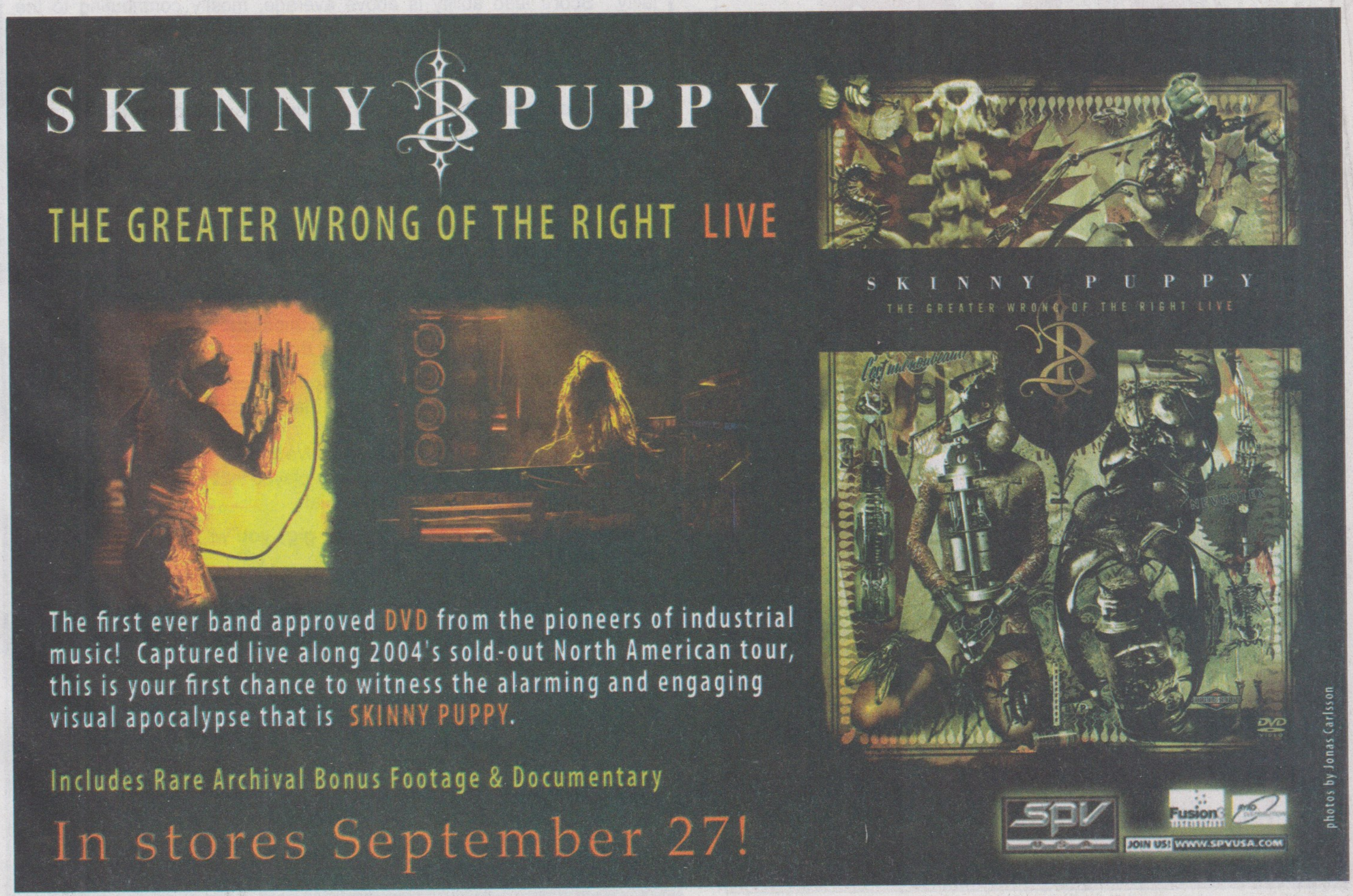
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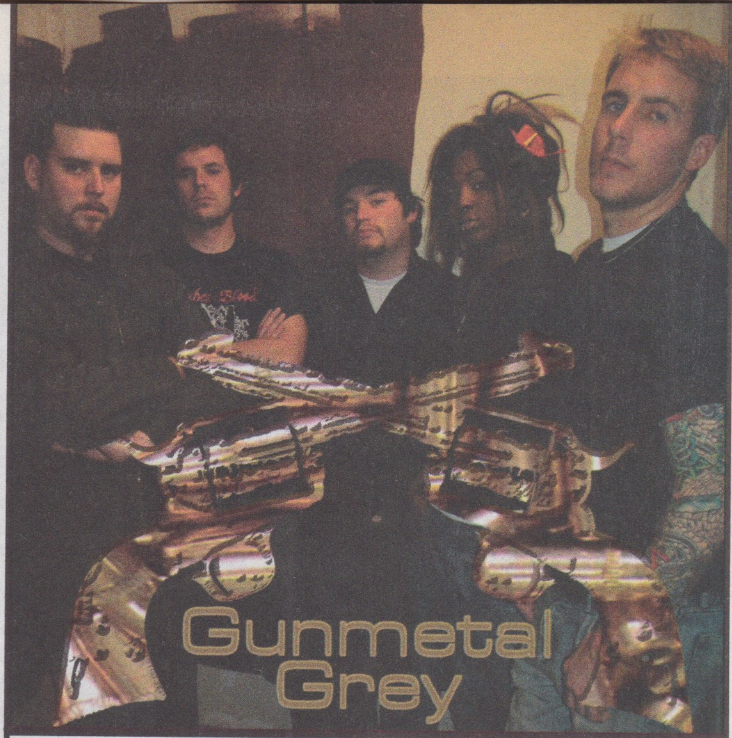



**by Bushman**

San Francisco has always produced some innovative metal. Gunmetal Grey is one of the newer contributions honing in on the hardcore/metal meld. Formed by rhythm guitarist Stephen Lauck (Hoods) and drummer Brandon Thomas (of S.E.E.D.), the band wrote an albums worth of songs with various musicians until the current lineup solidified with bassist Andrew Smith, lead guitarist Brandon Scot and vocalist Eddie Hermida. It's Hermida's vocal talents that should bring the deserved attention. He has the rare ability to thrown down a distinctive hardcore rasp and then back that up with a smooth, strong vocal presence that smoothes out the edges on what would otherwise be a full on frontal attack of hardcore brutality. Scot's lead ability is above average, mostly contributing to the relentless speedy thrash/hardcore riffage, he chooses wisely when to go off with an intricate guitar flourish. Six songs can be found on their Indianola Records debut "Solitude" signaling a strong start.

Singer Eddie Hermida was caught cleaning a loaded pistol, so we made him answer some of our questions before he shot somebody.

**Many of the songs on "Solitude" seem very first person, and/or directed at an individual (the words, "I" and "We" are often used), which gives a very personal feel to the album. Intentional? Or are the words not to be interpreted too literally?**
The words are intentional. However, I want my lyrics not to be taken too literally (more like an abstract painting). They were directed at specific people that aren't important enough to mention. I just want people to place themselves in my words and feel the music the way I do.

**San Francisco has always been supportive of a strong and progressive metal scene. How has the initial reaction to Gunmetal Grey been?**
It has been good, for the most part. We mostly play to hardcore kids though. The only real metal show we've played was with Strapping Young Lad and that was a metalcore show. Blah.

**What's been the worst reaction (or gig) you've had to play to pay your dues?**
Man, I live paying my dues. Every show sucks for me. I have to take time off work, miss out on money coming in to play small shows locally and not tour. We are not big man, we're just some people playing music.

**Start a wicked rumor about your band:**
I hear the singer is gay.

**What does your favorite music make you feel?**
Goosebumps on my penis!

www.gunmetalgreysf.com

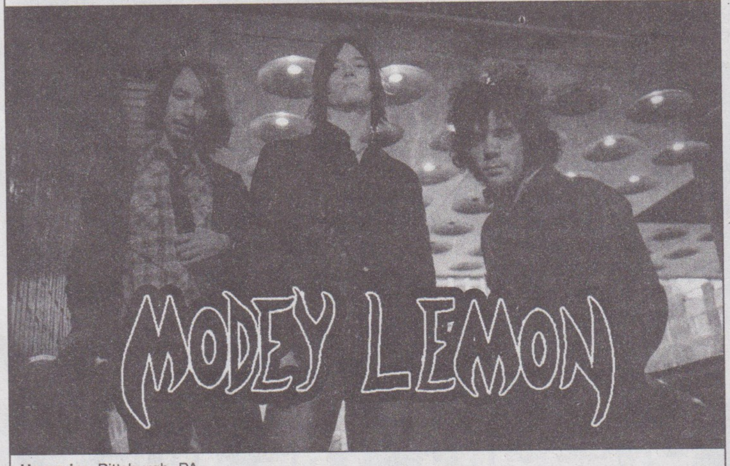
2005 "Solitude" (Indianola)

**Home:** Brooklyn, New York
**Tours:** Coliseum, Municipal Waste, Hot Cross,
**Album:** "End States" (G7 Welcoming Committee)
**Web:** hiretsukan.com
**The Name:** means 'hardcore as fuck' in Japanese

Fronted by a female (seems one needs to mention that in when the case applies, notice, no one ever says, 'fronted by a male'), Hiretsukan released an EP in 2002, broke up, the label threw a fit and threatened to break some knee caps, so the band re-united in 2004. "End States" is the result and what they are currently running around the east coast representing. Michelle Proffit tears out her vocal chords in a raspy strain while above average hardcore with liberal melodic interludes boils beneath her. There is one mode of vocals, and that's 'scream them in your ear until something bleeds'. It brings intensity even if it does sacrifice some range against the distance the music is traveling through the length of a single song. The end effect is decimating on its own terms so it's no wonder the label went out of their way to bring this unit back together. Check them out before someone eats someone else's Cheetos and they break up again.

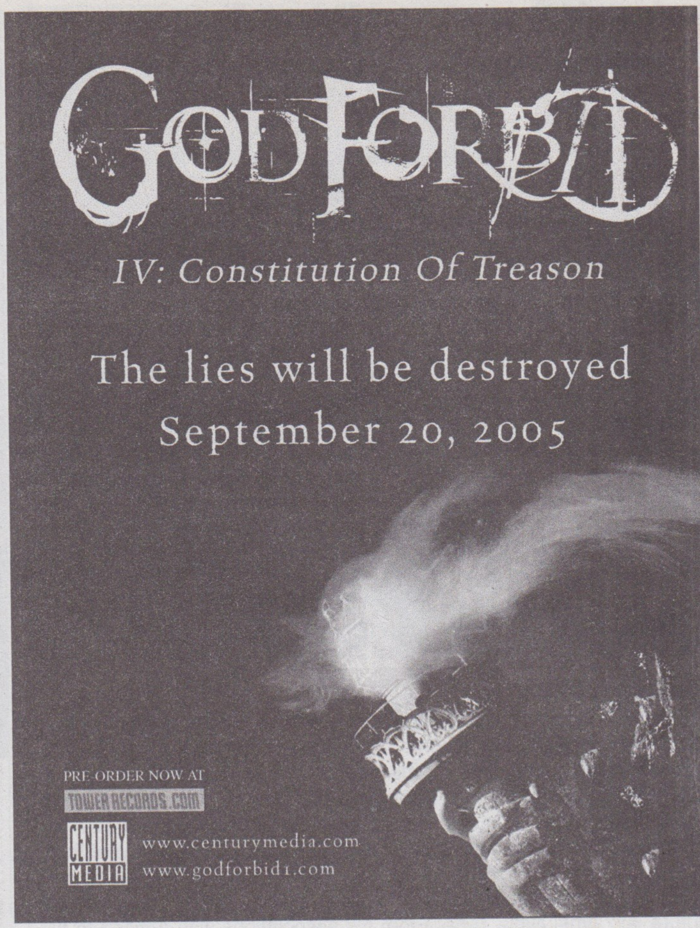
From: Richmond, Virginia
Album: "Of Writing/Of Violence" (Limekiln)
Web: silenttype.net
Fact: Silent film star Charlie Chaplin married his fourth wife (age 17) when he was 54; they had eight children, which makes 11 total for Charlie.

Virginia is well known for plenty of things, but what about presidential births? Eight white guys that went on to be president have been born here, more then any other state. And while The Silent Type's music is anything but presidential, it is both compelling and interesting, with a fiery intenseness stoked even more by their layering of different instruments and vocals (both male and female). Combine this with deep lyrics and slow, melodic instrumental aspects (especially the piano and violin) and you're left with a delicious concession for almost any indie rock pallet. Their debut album deserves attention.




**Home is:** Pittsburgh, PA
**Latest:** "The Curious City" (Birdman)
**Web:** themodeylemon.com
**The name:** comes from the rotting fruit that littered the ground of some of their first outdoor shows. Think of a lemon, covered in mold, then say, "Moldy Lemon" in your best British accent.

Modey Lemon... its guitar rock but done in such a way that it doesn't resemble, at all, any of the worthless comparisons critics are quick to draw lines to (White Stripes, etc). Instead, its an ensemble of distorted, almost tortured guitars, smashed fingers against Moog electronics and the Modey Lemon drumming dynamic that is smacking of both a DFA 1979 garage and Lightning Bolt cymbal cracking tempo. Even with that setup, don't be surprised to smell the familiar aromas of legends like The Who and Sonic Youth seeping out from a Modey Lemon song. They crave their own path and don't completely obsess about being abstract (aside from their sixteen minute epic track, "Trapped Rabbits"). It's suggestible that their latest, "The Curious City" should be listened to first, and then followed by their three previous full lengths and EP releases. Do it for the lemons.

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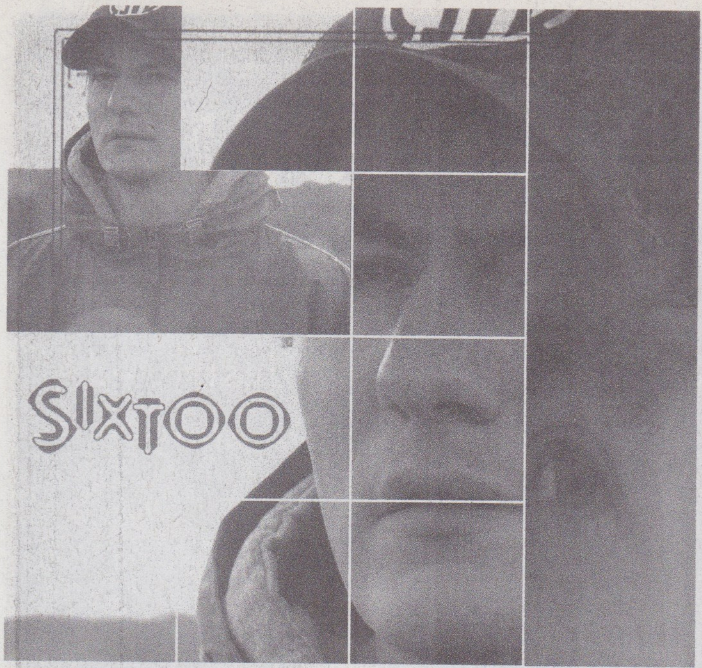



**by Teddy Rizzo**

Sixtoo just handles his business quietly these days. When Robert Squire is not producing albums for other people he is usually finding some time to manipulate drums back home in eastern Canada. He even dabbles with the guitar and as a member of the infamous 1200 Hobos with fellow Canadian Buck 65, where he can be heard over the microphone with lyrics that delve into the worlds of science, probabilities and global chaos. Last year's tour with Blockhead and DJ Signify got the producer out of his bedroom and out on the road representing future jazz label Ninja Tune. From his associations with Anticon to his helping hand on several artists' releases including Sage Francis and DJ Vadim, the subdued and understated Sixtoo has had his name on several non commercial hip hop albums of the late 90's. Sixtoo never tries to speak louder than his music. It's his way to make sure you will absorb everything he throws at you.

**Do you prefer producing or being on the microphone?**
DJ and making the music is where the heart is. There's more of a thrill in that aspect for me anyways. My last few albums have had very limited vocals, but that's just where I'm at right now. I still enjoy writing and collaborating.

**Is there a lot of unique art that comes out of Montreal?**
I'm originally from Toronto but moved to Montreal a few years ago. There are so many people in the city that are putting out art that it gets overwhelming. There is a huge cultural difference between the two cities and as far as art funding goes, Montreal is more generous with helping people get on their feet.

**Has touring been good to you?**
There's times when I'm touring that I love being away and on the road and then there's times when I'll get these anxiety spells and I just wanna be back home creating. Just glad I was able to finish up my last EP. It's never hard for me to get back into the swing of things and start playing some drums.

**Most overlooked emcee?**
In my opinion that would have to be Brother Ali, but there are a lot more.

**Will there ever be another Sebutones release?**
The thought has crossed my mind and we could possibly do another album in the future. I liked a lot of the stuff we did on that album. I think there are some people out there that would dig another Sebutones since it's been so long since the last one. I have been writing a lot but I guess I better start writing some more.

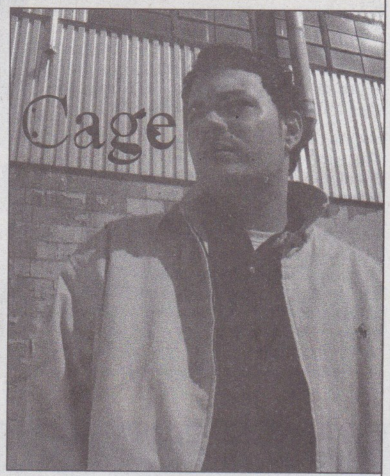
www.sixtoo.net

2004 "Chewing On Glass & Other Miracle Cures" (Ninja Tune)
2003 "Antagonist Survival Kit (Vertical Form)
2002 "Duration" (Cease & Desist)
2001 "The Psyche Intangible" (Metaforensics)
2000 "Psyche Continuum" (Metaforensics)

Lives: Slovenia (that's in Europe idiot)
Tours: in cities with names that are hard to pronounce
Release: "Deicubation" (Moonlee)
Web: entreat.net
Sponsorship: Somehow these guys got a Vans deal and get tons of free shoes.

There is a little country off the northern tip of Italy called Slovenia. It's too far east to be one of the 'cool' countries, but borders the sea and is rather picturesque. They are like the neighborhood between the rich section of town and the ghetto. This locale has spawned Entreat. A band that holds down a solid middle ground between a rawrly metalcore emo-metal and the more Euro-flavored Swedish melodic hardcore. The fast parts are manic and spiced with many subtle guitar leads and the smooth parts get simplified and cleaned up to an almost radio gloss. But mostly, the attack is metallic, the guitars are aggressive and the drums crush with a crazy precise double kick making Entreat one of the cooler metal bands you'll never see from a country you'll never visit.

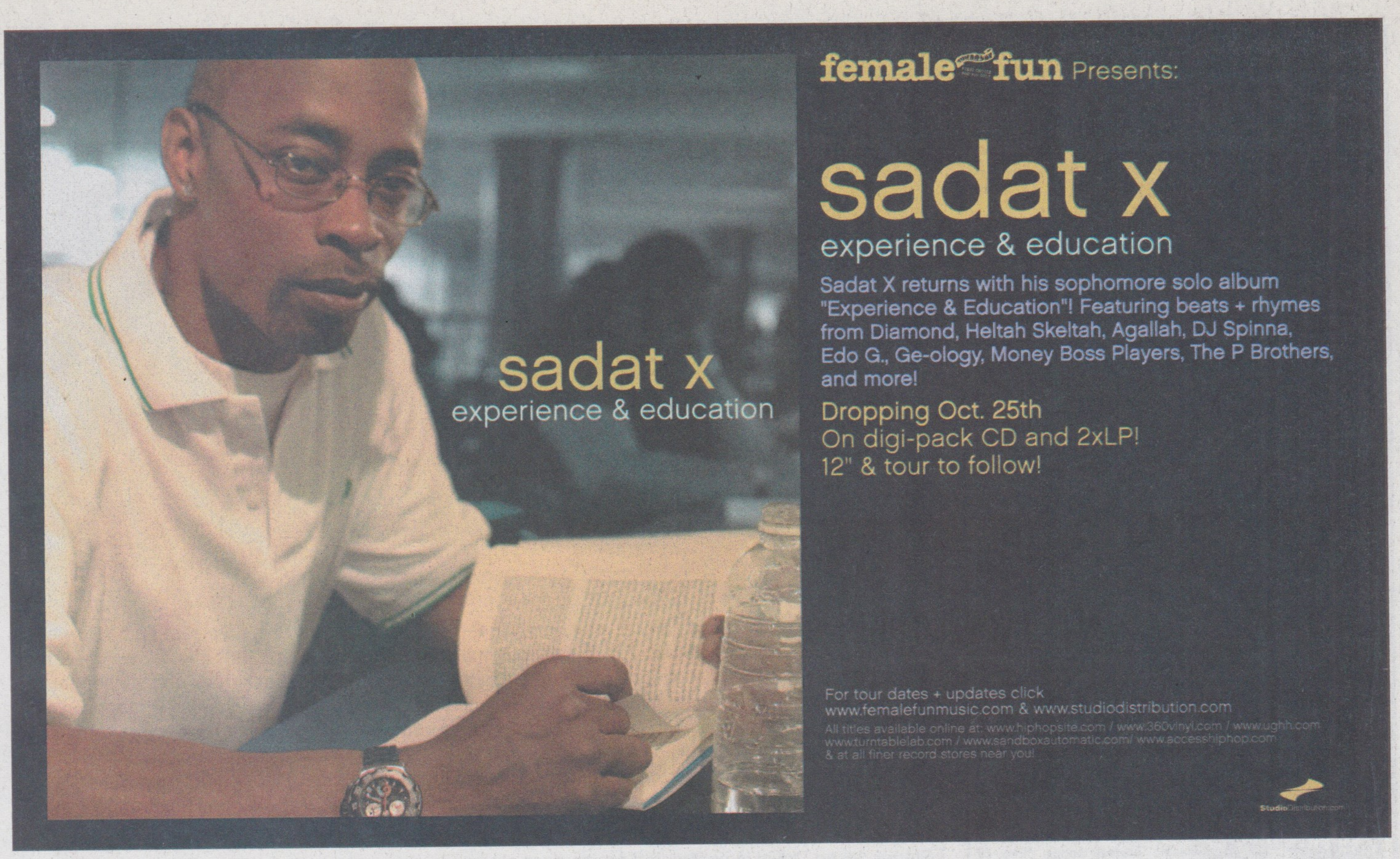
**Real name:** Chris Palko
**Debut:** "Hells Winter" (Def Jux)
**Part of:** The Weathermen crew (Vast Aire, Yak Ballz, Copywrite, El-P, etc)
**First recorded on:** ex-3rd Bass Pete Nice's album "Dust to Dust" at age 18




How is rap perceived? It's a rhetorical question, of course, but still open to interpretation. When the CD is playing, how is the rapper communicating with the listener? Telling a story? Bragging about his life, poor or rich? Or providing, over the camouflage of beats, an uninhibited vantage of a life in turmoil. This is the reality of Cage, a soul that while only twenty-something, has been tortured more then most of us combined. Listening to him feels like a documentary. Dad doing heroin, arrests, more drugs... it's all here but on a backdrop that even most thug "I been shot nine times!" rappers look the other way and keep driving. Worth mentioning is the plethora of heads on the tracks of his latest, "Hells Winter" (from Aesop to Jello Biafa). Cage is worth keeping close.

**Based:** San Francisco
**Listen:** "The Twelve Gauge Solution" (Goodfellow)
**Web:** blessingthehogs.com
**BTH myspace quote:** "I would kill myself if your god was mine."
**Should be worshiped for:** Their cover of Quicksand's "Fazer".

Mixing a groove so deep it leaves a mark, with cut and paste thrash explosions bridging the gaps like infected stitching, Blessing the Hogs is unique in their punishing metal. Creative constructions of pushed together metal with a bowel moving low end. Rarely do songs with this many parts hold themselves together so cohesively, and this case, with such brutal executions. They shift more gears than a trucker on cheap speed. Bonus cred for using a Boondock Saints sample. The band smells the future by bracing for the Mad Max inevitability our country is heading for. Bring 10 gallons of gas to their shows and get a free t-shirt. One crossbow gets you a sticker.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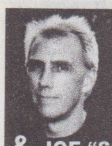

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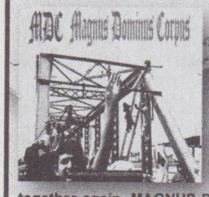

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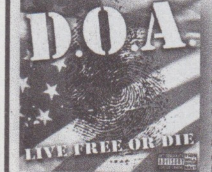

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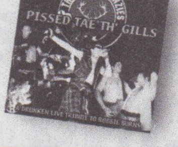

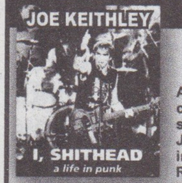

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**by Bushman**

Despite the metalcore pedigree of members former bands (Shadows Fall, Overcast and Killswitch Engage), Seemless is a rolling 70's guitar rock machine. The band ups the ante with bombastic riffage that gives a fresh vibe to their take on the blues-influenced rock. Each track on their self-titled debut is fueled by thick guitar riffage and smooth vocal work courtesy of ex-Killswitch Engage singer Jesse David. The ex-metal-screamer never sounded better rounding out his bark with a crooning yowl that hints of a southern-tinged rock and roll swagger. A bastard son of Soundgarden and Fu Manchu with an ability to stretch out the occasional jam into something more ambitious. Seemless has a steady hard rocker, "Lay My Burden Down" that is getting regular play on Headbanger's Ball where they recently made a guest appearance, so the masses should be waking up soon enough.

Singer Jesse David is confronted on his drug abuse…

**Seemless is a return to the rock. Did you feel it's something you were away from or lost touch with?**
No, I have never sang for a "rock" band in my life so, if anything, it's a beginning for me.

**Who represents the ideal rock formula?**
Soundgarden, Led Zeppelin, Porcupine tree, The Quill, Queens of the Stone Age and Cactus, to name a few.

**Who embodies the ideal rock and roll attitude?**
I think the ideal rock attitude has yet to be attained by one single person. For me it involves: heart and soul, integrity and really not losing touch with where you came from. Rock 'n roll is music for the people by the people as cheesy as that sounds. I think rock bands loose sight of that when they get all wrapped up in the fame, fortune and materialism.

**The musical climate in which Seemless is coming from is very metalcore as of late. Is it a weird vantage point for you guys to see the seeds you planted in other bands now coming fully into their own popularity?**
Yeah, we really appreciate the support we have gotten from the "metal core" or "metal" community. Massive respect to all our friends and peers who have supported us. However, we really have a much wider vision for the band and we want break out of that. Yeah we were in that "scene" but we never considered ourselves limited to it. We are musicians not bound by scenes or genres. We want to just play music, call it what you like. I am very happy for the bands we were involved with or we helped inspire good for them if they are truly happy.

**You've got a stoner rock vibe in those Sabbathy rhythms. Have you ever deseeded some mexi on a vinyl cover of Black Sabbath's "Paranoid"?**
No, we are not stoners, although thanks for the Sabbath reference. I haven't deseeded on a Paranoid album. If anything, if I was going to smoke, I would not have to do any deseeding.

**What album have you ever deseeded weed on?**
When I was a teenager I used a Bad Brains vinyl.

**You must agree, deseeding weed on a CD case is a joke. But those work well enough for chopping lines, eh?**
Wouldn't know. Are you speaking form experience? Are you down with nose candy? That's some sleazy stuff.

**Do drug questions make you uncomfortable?**
No, why do I seem PARANOID? Hey are you uncomfortable? Why should I be uncomfortable? Are you tracing this? Who do you REALLY work for pal? All I have to do is make a phone call and I will have you whacked! I mean, uhhh, next question.

**Are you on drugs right now?**
Alright guy, this interview is over...jokes, I kid. I just had some soy milk though - good stuff!

**If you ever played in San Diego, would you bring us some drugs from Worcestor?**
Worcester, talk about deseeding. You would have better luck over there from what I hear about you crazy Californians. Why so many drug questions? We are not even a stoner rock band. What are your motives for this interview?

www.seemlessband.com

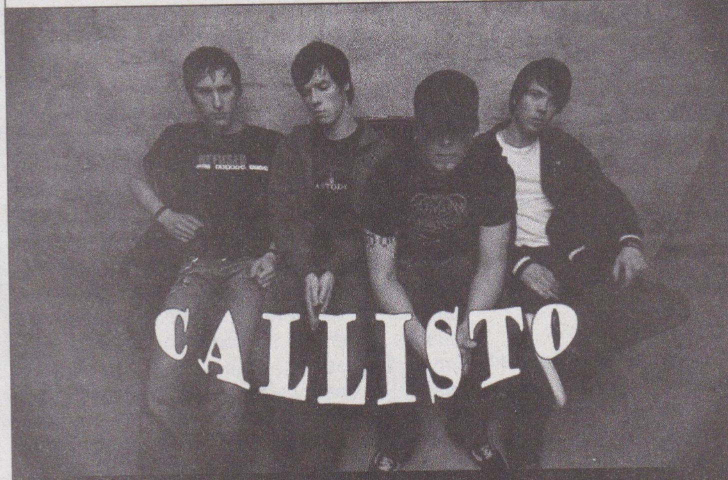
2004 "Self-Titled" (Equal Vision)

**From:** Portland, Oregon
**Latest:** "Talk Like Blood" (Polyvinyl)
**Web:** 31knots.com
**Have played with:** Get Hustle, Q and Not U, King Cobra, Hella, Pedro the Lion
**65mph is:** 56.5 Knots

One of the better things about 31 Knots is that they've already passed the mark from above average indie rock to a largely untapped genre of rock, pinching bits of a prog rock in a sound that can be both Sonic Youth and Modest Mouse. And like the latter, they definitely pick a course with a slightly different direction after each new album - the difference between their latest full length and the "The Curse of the Longest Day" EP before it are almost jarring at first, but easily swallowable and later, admirable and impressive. Since 31 Knots is a three piece, they've taken on some electronics to help layer parts of songs, something that they've used more commonly on "Talk Like Blood" and sounds pretty fucking cool. If you like your indie rock with more bloody twists and turns then a baby in a blender, check out 31 Knots. Plus, with a handful of full lengths and EP's, there is a nice catalog (and a mission) of great songs to collect.

**Location:** LA/Sacramento
**Album:** "I Got A Brand New Egg Layin' Machine" (Suicide Squeeze)
**Web:** suicidesqueeze.net
**Interesting combo burrito:** This has been dubbed the debut, "Mini Album" from Twiggy Ramirez (ex Marilyn Manson and NIN) Chris Goss from Masters of Reality and Zach Hill, who's in way too many fucking bands to name in this small of a space.

What may be one of the more unique parings of 2005; Hella's Zach Hill and Twiggy Ramirez from Marilyn Manson and NIN have teamed up with Chris Goss from Masters of Reality to form a mini super group, and recorded a mini album. There's something for everyone on "I Got A Brand New Egg Layin' Machine" - excluding fans of Burt Bacharach though; and ONLY fans of Bacharach! Dionne Warwick's audience may find a certain appeal in Hill's Art Blakey-like abilities behind the kit.




**Origin:** Finland
**Album:** True Nature Unfolds (Earache)
**Web:** callistochaos.com
**For fans of:** Neurosis, Isis, Cult of Luna
**Dr. Zaius says:** The moon named Callisto is the second largest of Jupiter's many natural satellites and is the same size as the planet Mercury

It was members of Cult of Luna who turned Earache Records onto these monstrously heavy Finns. Slow, churning epic-core is the order of the day here, but these guys aren't afraid to show their sensitive side as well. Extended mellow passages (some even with horns!) make this the doom metal version of Godspeed You! Black Emperor.

rottenrecords.com

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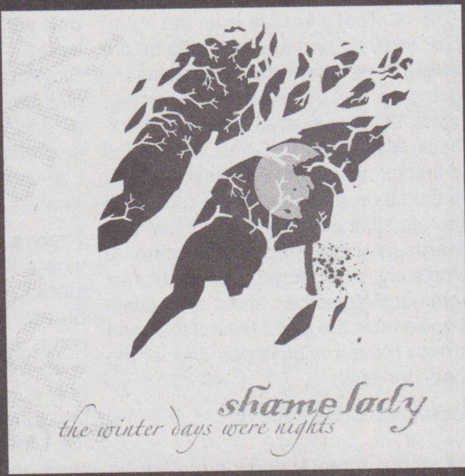
GAT-ROT
"US VERSUS THEM"



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SHAMELADY
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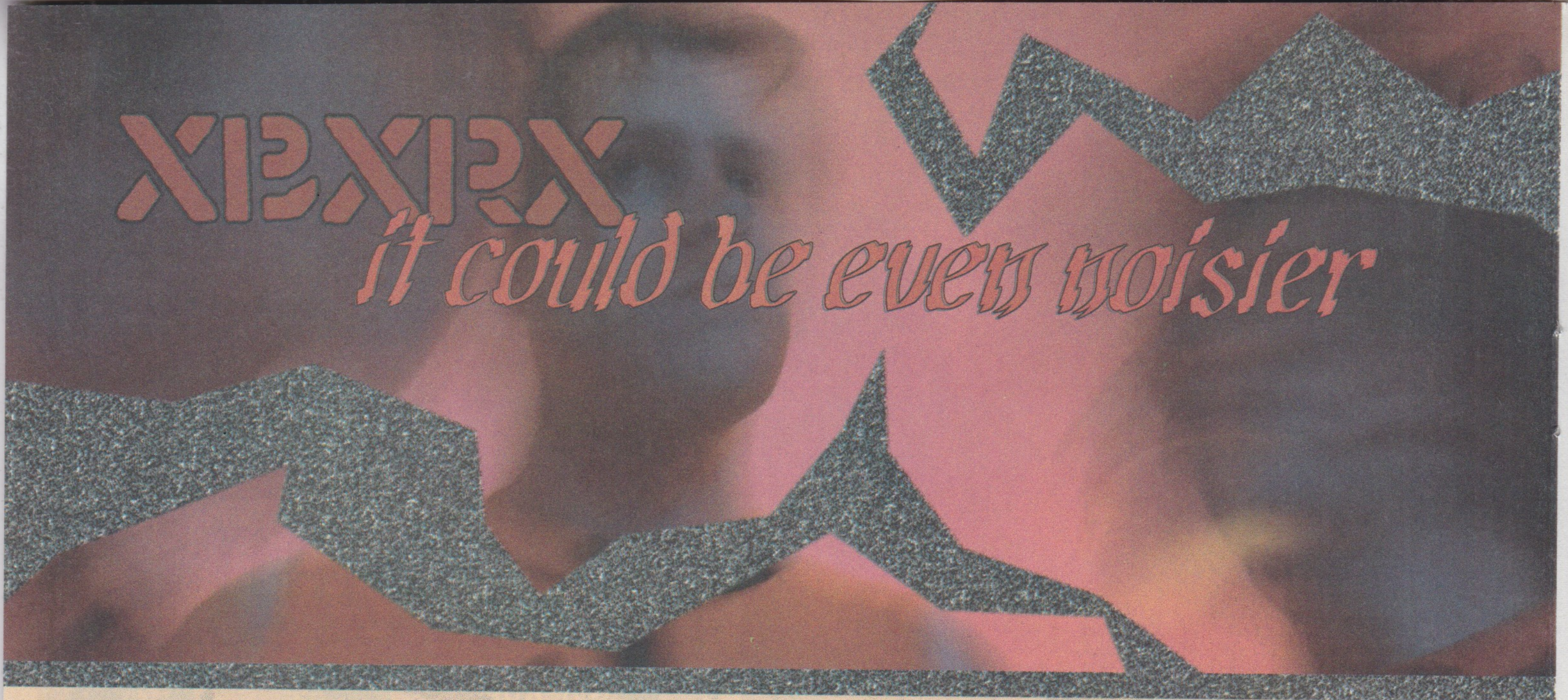

# XBXRX it could be even noisier

**by Jason Schreurs**

Imagine starting a noisy hardcore band at the ripe, tender age of 13-15. That's exactly what the members of xbxrx did in 1998, and it wasn't long before they were stealing a van from their bass player's mother and going on tour (or so the story goes). Now in their early '20s, the Alabama-based spazz-rockers are back with "Sixth in Sixes", their third full-length and first for new label, Polyvinyl. Sticking out like a sore thumb on a Midwest indie rock label isn't an unfortunate situation for xbxrx, it's just one more step towards forging a music career shrouded in the completely unexpected. xbxrx guitarist Stove and drummer Weasel talk about their latest concoction of noise rock, the ideas behind the band and their desire to remain anonymous and let the cacophony speak for itself.

Stove and Weasel talk to Modern Fix:

**A lot of bands start out really noisy and chaotic and then they get mellower and mellower as the years go on. This new record is very chaotic.**
*Stove:* Some would say that this record might be mellowing out for us. We've made it a point not to recreate the same album over and over and over. It's hard to say what direction that's going to lead in. It could be even noisier, it could be not noisy at all. We want to have a high level of intensity and energy in everything we do and that's something that we do well.

**What's with the nicknames?**
*Stove:* We're not into having our personal identities being a part of what the band is about. Names aren't really important. We try to make it more about the band and not about the people in the band.

We're allergic to writing the same song twice at this point and that's convenient because it allows us to explore variations.

**How do you present your band as a collective unit without focusing on the individual members?**
*Stove:* I think it's fairly easy to keep the individual platforms away from representing what the band as a whole is about. It's easy to keep the band agendas separate from the personal agendas. Everyone coming into the band is very aware of what it's about before coming into the picture.

**There's a lot of variation on the new record, where in the past you were more one-dimensional.**
*Stove:* This record has probably the noisiest songs we've ever put on a record and at the same time, we have one of the poppiest songs we've ever put on a record. There is a lot of variation in the songs and ways of approaching the songs, but I think it's still a lot more focused than the more one-dimensional records we've done.

**What was it like when you guys started the band? Did you feel out of place?**
*Stove:* I did feel incredibly out of place and everything was new to me at that time. We had never done any of the band stuff before. There were definitely some people who took us under their wing and made us feel a little more in place. This band from Florida called This Bike Is a Pipe Bomb would always have us come over there and play. They were really great about making us feel good about what we were doing and encouraging us to keep doing it.

[Stove then steps aside and lets drummer Weasel field some questions.]

**What is the agenda of the band?**
*Weasel:* Our music is not specifically influenced by a style or trend. When we write a song we don't think in terms of what style the song is going to be. We think in terms of how the parts are going to fit together and what it is we are doing. A lot of the noisiness that people usually associate with us has to do with looking at how rock and roll is normally made and questioning why it has to be the same elements every time.

**How much of your writing process and live shows is improvisational.**
*Weasel:* [laughs] Very little. There's elements of improvisation in the band. But right now we are very concerned with song structure and having a varied approach. We're allergic to writing the same song twice at this point and that's convenient because it allows us to explore variations. I think the band has grown a lot. All the members of the band are really open to different methods. We've done improvising on stage where it's really spontaneous, weird shit that comes out, and I think we're open to that to. You know, we... [laughs maniacally] there's a wildness to our band, and we enjoy letting that wildness happen. Whether it's the intensity of our show or just improvising all of a sudden. We've heard comments that our album is very dark, and I guess it is dark in a way, but there's also black humor. Our music could be viewed as extreme, but there's a range of emotions to it.

**Tell me a little bit about your live show. What are you trying to put forward to the audience?**
*Weasel:* Our shows are really intense. The whole point is to try to do something extraordinary for and hopefully with the audience. We pour a lot of psychical and psychic energy into our performance. It's manic. But it's not like some pop-punk band jumping up on the big downbeat before the chorus. It's really frantic because I think we all have... [laughs] a certain amount of desperation. For us aggression doesn't mean this hardcore, jock, macho violence aggression. The aggression is the amount of energy we use to achieve our goal. When we're doing a show we're trying to raise everybody above the floor by a few feet and we have to conjure up that energy to really get everything going. It's a ritual. We're trying to give people something that they can't get at home.

www.xbxrx.com

2005 "Sixth in Sixes" (Polyvinyl)
2002 "Clear" (Tapes)
2000 "Gop Ist Minee" (5RC)

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**by Jason Schreurs**

Against Me! have recently finished their new album, "Searching for a Former Clarity" (Fat Wreck Chords) with respected producer J Robbins (Jawbox, Burning Airlines). Finally getting some time off from the long haul of the road, the trials and tribulations of which are detailed in their "We're Never Going Home" DVD from last year, Against Me! stayed put in their hometown of Gainesville for a couple of months writing the new batch of songs. They then spent a full month in Baltimore recording the record with Robbins. It's a far cry from the recording of their earlier records, which were done in a flurry and didn't allow singer/guitarist Tom Gabel and the rest of the band the time needed to get exactly the sound they wanted. I chatted with Gabel, fresh out of the studio, about the new record. Although he didn't want to reveal too much about the particular songs on this 14-track opus, I was able to put him in the Schreurs death-lock and squeeze a little bit of info out of him.

**You just finished recording the new album with J Robbins. Did it meet all of your expectations?**

I feel really happy about it. It's an accomplishment for us that we're really proud of. We took our time with it and made a concerted effort to give it all we could as far as song writing on our end and J Robbins was the perfect choice to record it. He gets really great sounds and is just an awesome producer.

**What was he like to work with? How involved did he get in the process?**

J was fucking rad. It was cool to work with someone that we were asking his opinion on stuff and it was known it was alright for him to give his opinion. Then he voiced his opinion, but also did so in a very constructive and effective way that, in every single case, only turned out to the benefit.

**Your last couple of records were rushed in the recording and writing process. How much difference did having more time make in getting your sound?**

It made a tremendous difference, because it's not only having a short time in the studio, but you go in and you're really nervous. You feel a little unsure of yourself, and I think the amount of time we took to write and practice and make sure we had everything hammered out gave us a certain amount of confidence too, where we felt relaxed going into it. And then on top of that, having all the time to be in the actual studio also gave us a certain amount of confidence that I think shows.

**One of the best things about your songs is you are able to give people important messages in a personal way. It's that old "the personal is the political" thing. I'm just wondering if you struggle with that? Is it a hard thing to do? Does it come natural to you?**

It's definitely something I struggle with that I hope I'm getting better at. I feel you grow as a person and become more comfortable with yourself. My life is really different from other people's lives, but I'd like to be able to write lyrics and songs that other people can relate to, regardless of what their personal situation is in life. But I'd feel phony trying to pretend I'm something I'm not, when what I am is a dude in a band who travels around the country with his friends playing shows, you know?

**Any themes you're touching on this album?**

It's 14 songs long and, for us, that's epic! It's 48 minutes [laughs]. "As the Eternal Cowboy" was 25 minutes and we had to stretch time between songs to make it that. So this is epic for us. I'm writing from my perspective again, and that's really all I know how to do, but I feel proud that I did a good job getting across an underlying message. I feel we tried to play into some of the stuff that's surrounding us right now and fool people with that, and flip something in there. I'm trying to skirt the question and not give it away.

**"Holy Sh*t!" sounds like a sequel to "Turn Those Clapping Hands into Angry Balled Fists" (from "As the Eternal Cowboy").**

To be honest, my vote was not to have "Holy Sh*t!" on the record, because I thought it sounded too much like a sequel, but everyone else shot down my vote [laughs]. Everyone else liked it. As far as being a sequel, it just came out like that, and I do recognize the similarities between the two songs.

**That last song, the title track, "Searching for a Former Clarity" has real finality to it.**

That song is the one I'm most proud of on the whole record. It was written to be the last song. It was something that I had to push myself to do. We were recording and we had the crux of the record done and I wanted to write one more song that would tie everything together and take an element from all the other topics that are touched upon on this record, and it's going to end the album and connect them all together.

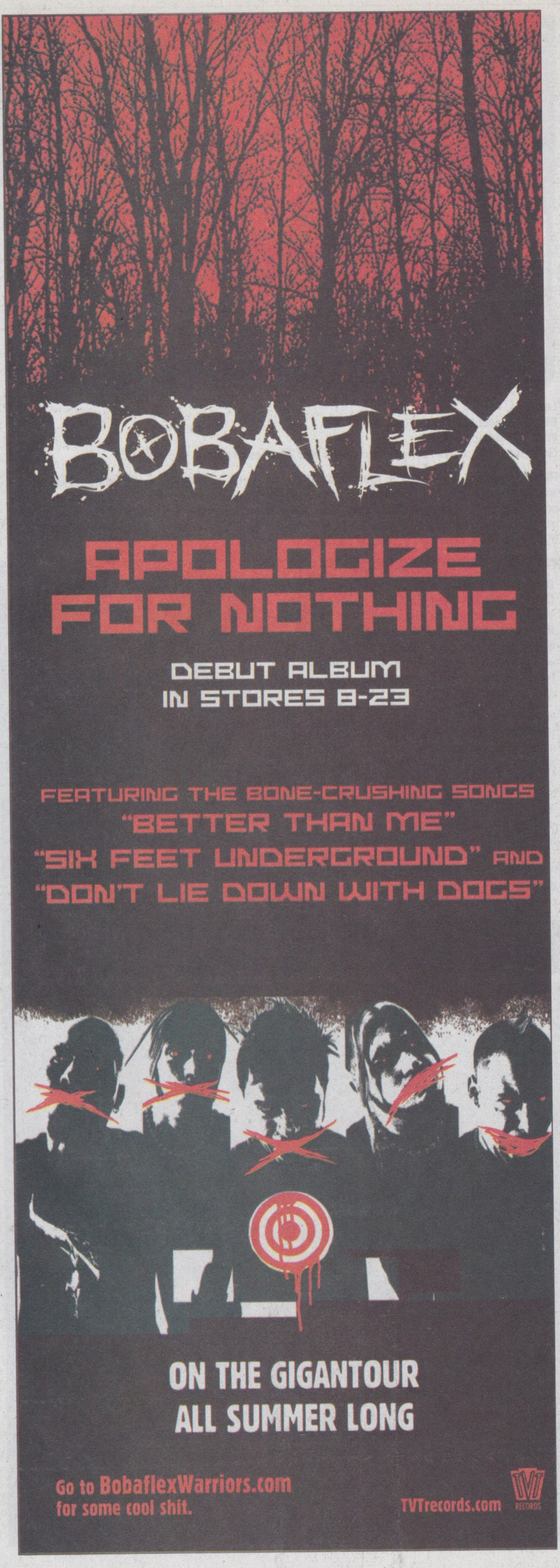
**So was this record a hard one to write lyrically?**

Pretty much all of the lyrics came easily. I was trying to be very strict on just letting it come, and as it would come, just moving on. And that's how we ended up with a lot of songs. It wasn't getting an idea and whittling it down to the perfect song. It was just keep going and keep the train of thought flowing. Whatever comes out of it, comes out of it, and if it's awkward, it's awkward. If it sounds arrogant, it sounds arrogant. If it sounds stupid, then so be it. It's honest, and that's all I can do.

**Whatever comes out of it, comes out of it, and if it's awkward, it's awkward. If it sounds arrogant, it sounds arrogant. If it sounds stupid, then so be it. It's honest, and that's all I can do.**

www.againstme.net

2005 "Searching for a Former Clarity" (Fat Wreck Chords)
2004 "We're Never Going Home" DVD (Fat Wreck Chords)
2004 "The Disco Before the Breakdown" (No Idea)
2003 "As the Eternal Cowboy" (Fat Wreck Chords)
2002 "Reinventing Axl Rose" (No Idea)


BOBAFLEX
APOLOGIZE FOR NOTHING
DEBUT ALBUM
IN STORES 8-23
FEATURING THE BONE-CRUSHING SONGS
"BETTER THAN ME"
"SIX FEET UNDERGROUND" AND
"DON'T LIE DOWN WITH DOGS"
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ALL SUMMER LONG
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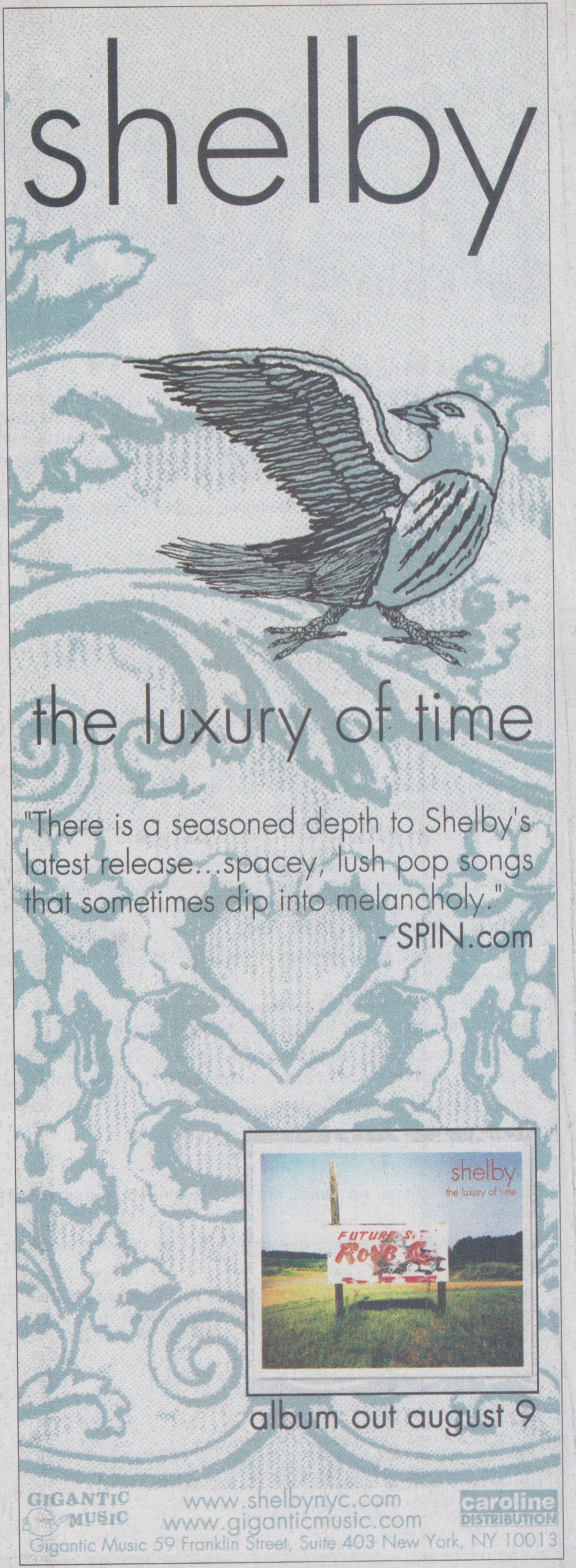
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the luxury of time
"There is a seasoned depth to Shelby's latest release...spacey, lush pop songs that sometimes dip into melancholy."
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### by James Wright

**An interview with GWAR is an event in itself. After arriving late, Beefcake the Mighty grabbing me by the throat and, after the beating of a lifetime, asked to step into the shower with him and Jizmak Da Gusher. After a polite, "No Thanks" response, Beefcake pulled me in and locked the door behind him.**

*Jizmak:* I'm really glad we're in the shower together; it gives us a chance to cum clean about a lot of things.

*Beefcake:* We're in Toronto! Which is 75% gay and the other half just accept it?

*Jizmak:* Wait that's like five quarters!

*Beefcake:* It's metric!

*Jizmak:* Quarters are still metric?

*Beefcake:* Ya' and you can spend them in Ottawa.

*Jizmak:* Wait, I got a question for you, you take a Canadian quarter into a pizza parlor in the States and try and play Miss Pacman, it won't accept it, right? You bring an American quarter into Canada and use it in a Miss Pacman game here, in Toronto, and Beefcake claims you can play that game once, maybe twice.

**I did my laundry last night with an American quarter.**

*Jizmak:* That's bullshit! I'm so pissed off right now. Listen, if you go down to the United States with a sack of 150,000 Canadian quarters, it's worthless? You can't even buy a gumball? You can't buy a gumball with a sack of 150,000 Canadian quarters!

*Beefcake:* Now, if you were here in Canada with a sack of Antarctic glitch-mechs…

*Jizmak:* They don't even accept those in Antarctica, except for a few Penguin prostitutes. The economy is just booming there.

*Beefcake:* Outstanding! We have a bowling alley now, which is connected to a juice factory. It's happy-hour at parliament right now!

*Jizmak:* We have thirsty Thursday's as well.

**Now do they take American quarters there?**

*Jizmak:* Absolutely not.

**So to wrap things up, what are you hoping that this record achieves?**

*Beefcake:* World domination, desecration and defamation. Are those words?

*Jizmak:* I'm just hoping I can pay my rent at the loft above the Bowling Alley back in Antarctica, because it's so fucking expensive.

www.gwar.net

2005 "Live from Mt. Fuji" (Rte / Drt)
2004 "War Party" (Rte / Drt)
2001 "Violence Has Arrived" (Metal Blade)
1999 "We Kill Everything" (Metal Blade)
1997 "Carnival of Chaos" (Metal Blade)
1995 "RagNaRok" (Metal Blade)
1994 "This Toilet Earth" (Metal Blade)
1992 "Road Behind" (Metal Blade)
1992 "America Must Be Destroyed" (Metal Blade)
1990 "Scumdogs of the Universe" (Metal Blade)
1988 "Hell-O" (Metal Blade)

Location: NYC,
EP: "Prospect Hummer" (Fat-Cat)
Web: fat-cat.com
Goes well with: Guys named Panda Bear and other such animal names

Playing the harp is REALLY in right now. "It's You" opens up the album with its beautiful melodic sound. "Prospect Hummer" seems to have a strong Peruvian influence. It is interesting in juxtaposition to their experimental sampling and ethereal instrumentation. Be careful! "Baleen Sample" may cause you to lose all control and jump into the ocean in search of living creatures! Keep an eye out for their next full length due this fall!

**Born and raised:** Jacksonville, NC
**Debut :** "Squirrel and the Aces" (ABB)
**Web:** cesarcomanche.8m.com
**Exclusive member of:** Justus League
**Story behind album name:** Squirrel and the Aces was the name of Cesar's fathers band, of whom his mother was also a member of.

Spending a weekend in North Carolina will establish three facts with any guest: it's fucking hot, it's fucking muggy and the fucking Cicada's never shut the fuck up at night. Luckily, Cesar Comanche is far from annoying; his third album, "Squirrel and the Aces" is a heaping serving of collaborations, guest beats and better beats then 95% of that east coast shit. Cesar's latest reminds even more that, if clicks like this can easily defeat them, Dilated Peoples have completely lost their edge.

**Location:** Montreal
**Album:** "Amoureux Cosmiques" (Alien8 Recordings)
**Web:** alien8recordings.com
**Endorsed by Lita Ford:** "Went to a party last saturday night, didn't get laid, got in a fight, uh-huh, it ain't no big thing." The band actually named themselves after a classic 1955 film noir.

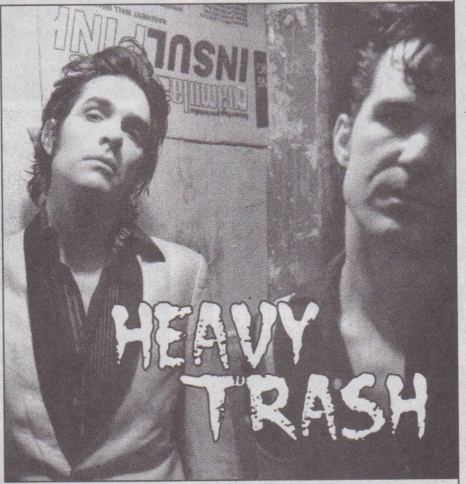
This Canadian quartet has transmogrified from their early years of kicking out emo/math rock, to making melodic and danceable songs that veer near the end of the pop music realm. Their eclectic mix of rock grooves and dance laden beats provides for a potpourri of exciting new music from the Great White North. Revel in their humor, but beware of the aftermath that Kiss Me Deadly leaves in their wake.

**From:** Parkersburg, VA
**Album:** "I See You Through Glass" (Hand of Hope)
**Web:** cultofgods.com
**For those in the know:** Gods founder (Jesse Smith) was one of the main men in metal-core Zao.
**For those in the unknow:** Zao would kick your ass, but in a nice way.
**For those who think they're in the know:** You're not. Gods is not Zao.

Gods is brooding. Gods is dark. Gods is heavy. Gods is suffocating. Gods is what you need. Gun shot snares accent a soundscape that is ready to be dropped on any field full of dead bodies while the members of Gods run through the darkness getting mud in their hair. This isn't quite metal, but it isn't quite straight rock. Gods treads a ground between the two, leaving lesser bands on both sides of the fence in their wake. While Jesse Smith still ruminates on faith and God, this is not a Christian CD. His ideas and thoughts are more poignant after spending a lot of years in the Christian music circuit. The last track, "I See You Through Glass" is a scream to God about the barriers that faith can build. The music tries to push you through, but the glass is too thick.

**Location:** NYC
**Album:** "Heavy Trash" (Yep Roc)
**Web:** yeproc.com
**For Fans of:** The Blues Explosion, Speedball Baby, Rev. Horton Heat and miscellaneous rockabilly bands, etc.

I figured it wouldn't be long before Jon Spencer would go on to form a rockabilly band. He's been rocking out since the eighties with Pussy Galore, then on into the nineties with his flammable Blues Explosion. Now he's teamed up with Matt Verta-Ray from Speedball Baby to create Heavy Trash. It's a tattooed-sleeved rockabilly fans wet dream. Without giving too much away, all I can say is that track #9 "Gatorade" is well worth the price of purchase alone. Go on kids! Have a hootenanny even if you don't know what it is!



**Location:** Chicago, Illinois
**Album:** "Lava Land"
**Web:** ccmlabel.com/piglet (Team AV)
**For Fans of:** Pele, Hella, Volta Do Mar, Don Caballero, Chevreuil

What the fuck!?! Another instrumental rock band? Well, maybe we should listen to "Lava Land" first before making any assumptions. Okay, my bad. These guys kick ass! Piglet covers the map on "Lava Land." Making everything from prog rock, math rock and metal riffage available on this tantalizing album. Piglet's "Lava Land" is something to be "discovered," not "found." Make it to the pier baby; just make it to the pier.

# Weerd Science

**by Jason Schreurs**

Betcha never thought the side project from a member of Coheed and Cambria would be an old school rap CD. But that's exactly what Coheed drummer Josh Eppard has unleashed on the world with Weerd Science, his long-running rap project finally available to the masses. But do they want it? "Friends and Nervous Breakdowns" is a skilled rap album full of anger and cussing, usually directed towards authority figures and other bullies in Eppard's life, and it's already causing quite a stir with its uncompromising lyrics and completely un-Coheed style. You gotta give this dude credit for sticking his neck out there and waiting for the guillotine to fall. Weerd Science is important to Eppard (he's been rapping since he was 13) and it's cool to see him following through with it for the release of this CD. If Coheed heads don't like it, fuck 'em. Weerd Science will find an audience somewhere, and Eppard will deserve it. Fuckers.

**What's been the response so far from Coheed and Cambria fans to the Weerd Science CD?**

The response from Coheed fans has been pretty much mixed so far. The people who like that shit seem to really like it (believe it or not!) and the stupid retards who don't like it REALLY don't like it. That's why they're stupid retards. For real though, I think it's hard for some people to grasp the fact that it's so different.

**Your bio says this CD is a rallying cry for the outcasts, the geeks, the nerds.**

Well geeks, nerds, outsiders, etc. are what we are. Is it too cliche to say that any Weerd record I've done is truly an outlet for what's inside. Going to school I never felt like I fit in. I never was accepted as one of the elite, cool kids. That's when Weerd started and it's kind of been a running theme throughout all this shit. I mean, look at a song like "Joshua They're Laughing at You" and that speaks for itself. Other songs though, like "My War, Your Problem" where the general idea is artist vs. record label I say, "I been rappin' since I was a lil' coward" and talk of being slapped around at school.

**Are you a fan of that '80s movie, Weird Science?**

Yes.

**The songs on this CD are very angry. Is a large part of doing Weerd Science to have that kind of emotional release?**

Of course, I think it's obvious. I'm in a pretty successful rock band and put out what some might view as an insanely offensive record.

**People are just waiting for the trendy kid at school to like it first or their favorite band to say it's cool. Fuck those people, I don't want 'em to like my shit.**

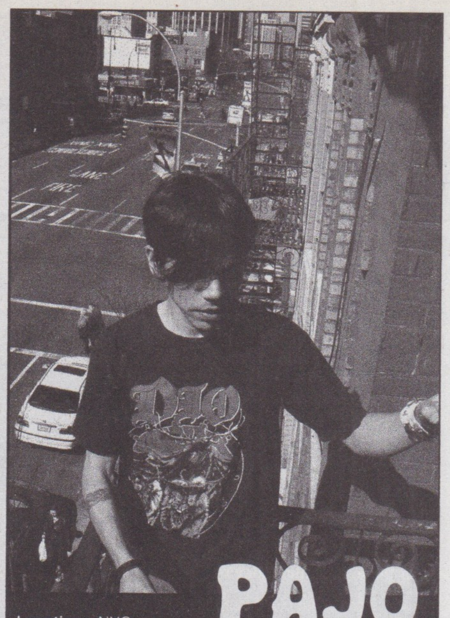
Knowing damn well people will call me an Eminem wannabe, say I suck, just shit all over me, but that record is still sittin' in a motherfuckin' store right now, right? I can't deny this release. This shit is important to me, as important as anything. What kills me is when I read a review where these stupid assholes assume I just threw a record out in the world and expected it to sell like fuckin' hotcakes. I do this 'cause I love it, 'cause if I heard this shit I'd be fuckin' down. People are just waiting for the trendy kid at school to like it first or their favorite band to say it's cool. Fuck those people, I don't want 'em to like my shit.

**Tell me about rhyming? Is it hard to master? What about in a live setting? Is it a challenge to pull it all off?**

Yes, I imagine it would be hard to master. For the most part, my whole record is shit from two years ago. I'd like to think if we got up in the studio right now I'd be doper than before, at least I'd like to think so! A lot of those songs have been kickin' around in my room for so long. Some got leaked to the 300 people who give a shit, but some were actually new to everyone. Like, nobody heard it. My point is the stuff on the CD is old, so if I could ever master rhymin' (which I couldn't), right now I'd be two years closer. Live is crazy hard, I'll leave it at that.

www.weerdscience.com

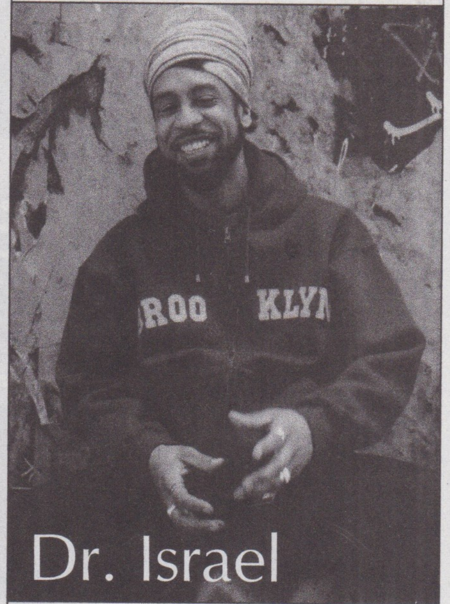
2005 "Friends and Nervous Breakdowns" (Equal Vision/Super Rap)



# PAJO

**Location:** NYC
**Album:** "?" (Drag City)
**Web:** dragcity.com
**Headbanger's Fact:** Dave was at one point in time the bass player for the triumphant Metal revivalist Early Man!

Dave Pajo is a renaissance man if there ever was one. From Slint, to Papa M, to just being a fucking headbanger, Pajo is a trendsetter when it comes down to it. And while his latest self-titled release on Drag City records isn't exactly a fresh take on "Holy Diver" it is without a doubt fresh new music from one of indie rocks most unsung heroes.



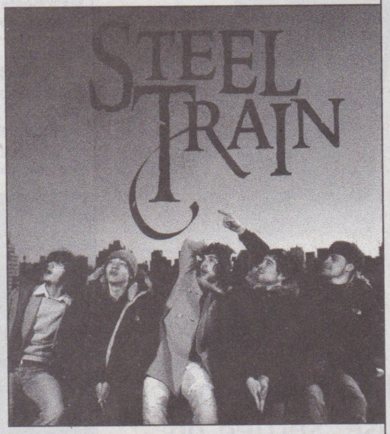
# Dr. Israel

**Home is:** Brooklyn, NY
**Upcoming album:** "Patterns of War" (ROIR)
**Web:** roir-usa.com
**Punks will remember Dr. Israel from:** that track "Coppers" on the reggae-laden Rancid album, "Life Won't Wait"

In 1989, Dr. Israel Shahak said "There is nothing that frightens Israeli society so much as Palestinian moderation". Nine years later, Dr. Israel (no relation) helped frighten the compilation dub reggae manufacturers by releasing the most excellent "Inna City Pressure," and now ROIR has re-released that very album, cleaned up and including two new tracks. How refreshing is this type of dub? Very. When most think of dub reggae, they think of what that shitty smoke shop / clothing shack / record store on Melrose in Hollywood plays. You know... thump thump thump shit, usually accompanied by lots of cheap incense smoke and some white dude with dreads behind the counter. Dr. Israel is far from that, so it's no surprise to hear his name mentioned with DJ Shadow and the likes. Guy has talent, and both the re-release and his new "Patterns of War" prove that.

From: Murfreesboro, TN
Debut: "Self Titled" (Corrosive)
Web: tonydanzatapdanceextravaganza.com/
Tony Danza: has a tattoo that says "Keep on truckin'"

While sitting around the garage working on a 12'er, I'm sure The Tony Danza Tap Dance Extravaganza wasn't the first name choice, but at least it shows they have a sense of humor. Why else would they write song titles like "God Ain't Got No Use for no 180lb Bag of Sugar" and "Cliff Burton Surprise?" With the all the name bullshit is out of the way, The Tony Danza Tap Dance Extravaganza makes up for their dumb humor by playing pretty fucking brutal hardcore mixed with some of that sexy tech metal we all love... they're like Evergreen Terrace, only good. Catch these motherfuckers on tour.

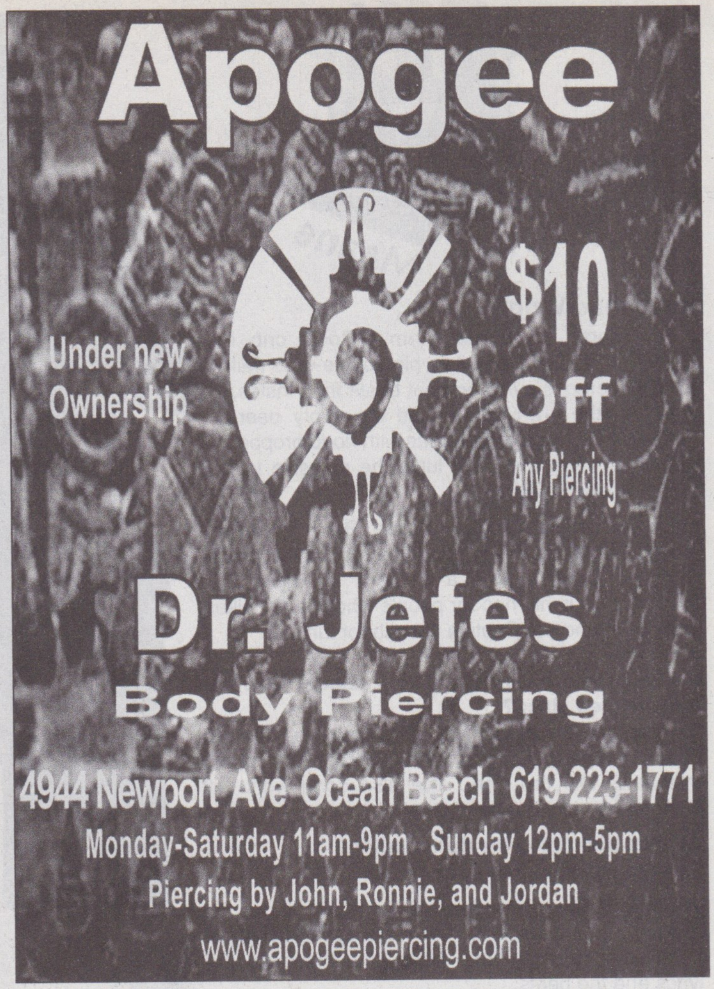



**From:** New Jersey
**Album:** "Twilight Tales from the Prairies of the Sun" (Drive-Thru)
**Web:** steeltrainrock.com
**Needed Supplies:** Patchy corduroys, Birkenstock sandals, puppy with frayed rope leash, loose tobacco and zig zags
**Flashbacks:** Grateful Dead, Joe Cocker, Crosby, Stills, and Nash

Who else is throwing marimbas and mandolins and steel guitars into the mix these days? Well, to fill the void Steel Train decided to add every instrument they could think of to their rolling journey through the land of the Grateful Dead. They are channeling some serious influences from "Bitter Love," the airy country opener, to the jam band funk of "The Lee Baby Simms Show," these guys dance through different genres, but don't overuse any of them.

**From:** Peoria, IL
**Album:** "Late Night Conversations" (Victory)
**Web:** thefore-cast.net
**Tour:** For the last six months, they probably slept on 100 couches.
**Smells like:** Used motor oil

The Forecast are blending indie with punk mixed to intertwining male and female vocals to create a ride that is in one second smooth and in the next breakneck. They sing about small towns and how sometimes giving up is the only option. They sing about straight highways and whiskey, about the place you grew up in and the place you'll end up. Shannon's voice soars over the rummage of music while Dustin's voice breaks through the surface like a shark lunging for a six year old sitting in a row boat. "Late Night Conversations" sounds the way their live shows feel. It's brutal and it will tear you apart. Good luck piecing yourself back together.



# BIG B

## White Trash Means Regular

**by James Wright**

Just around the corner from J-Roc's crib in Sunnyvale Trailer Park sits a big double-wide trailer. The stereo is pumping phat beats from inside, while on the lawn surrounded by empty beer cans sits a pimped out Cadillac with hood propped up. Underneath the hood lurks the massive tattooed rapper known as Big B.

Originally hailing from Las Vegas, Big B latest solo album, "White Trash Renegade", is hip-hop for people who can barely afford a six-pack of Pabst Blue Ribbon. This is hip-hop for people who like dirt bikes, drink beer and eat Captain Crunch for lunch.

**It's been over a year since your debut. How has life changed since?**
More people know who I am lately. Also I've been a lot busier with promotional activities such as touring, and interviews like this one. I've also done work with Controversy and the band OPM.

**At what point did you start rapping?**
I started rapping when I was thirteen.

**Were you always into hip-hop?**
Always. Some aspects that have specifically garnered by attention have been breakdancing, the lyrics and the beats.

**What's the most white trash thing you've ever done?**
Well, I lived in a trailer park. To me, "white trash" pretty much means "regular". You'd have to ask somebody else what it means, someone who isn't white trash.

**This album about everything from being broke to dirt bikes. Do you think the mainstream ignores you because of the fact that you're a big white guy rapping about things that aren't prominent in hip-hop and black culture?**
Yeah for sure, but that's why I do it. I just rap about my life, what's going on and myself and other people relate to it. That doesn't mean I don't respect traditional black hip-hop, I just have a different view of reality. How many mainstream artists who have radio airplay are real gangsters and driving $300,000 cars? Not too many.

**So then, does mainstream success appeal to you?**
I'd love to be able to pay my bills. To get our views and thoughts out to that many people would be great too. Keeping this in mind, we're always going to play by our own rules.

**What kind of shit have A&R guys told you that you need to change in order to sign with them and be successful?**
They just want pop songs and the problem is you have some 45-year old guy, that doesn't even know what's going on, telling you what he wants to hear. It gets pretty bad when you're in the studio recording and you have you're A&R guys, who know hardly anything about music, trying to tell you how to re-write a song so later he can say, "I told him to re-write that!" Just the way major labels try to dictate what's going on is bad news. It's kind of like this fish where they bait you with money and as soon as you grab for that money, you're hooked and they're reeling you in. Even if the record is done they're like, "Well, see if you can make these any better." They just keep wanting you to produce. It's like if you had someone build you a house, settled on a price and then tried to get them to build an extra room.

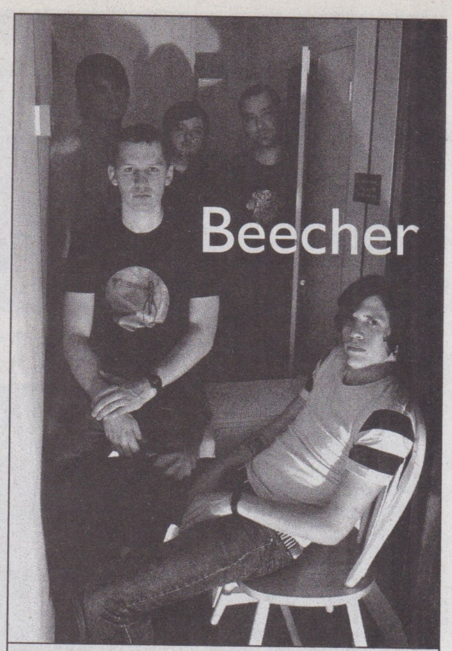
> **It's like if you had someone build you a house, settled on a price and then tried to get them to build an extra room.**

**Just how many records do you need to sell independently to make a comfortable living?**
About 5% of what a major artist will need on a major label.

**Do you think there is a myth that you have to be aligned with a major label to make a living in the music industry?**
Yes, definitely. It's all in the type of deal you sign. All you have to do is ask the Kottonmouth Kings.

www.suburbannoizerecords.com

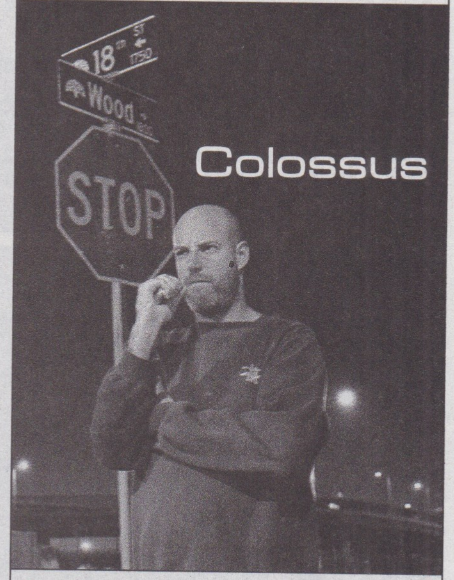
2005 "White Trash Renegade" (Suburban Noize)
2004 "High Class White Trash" (Suburban Noize)



## Beecher

**Hometown:** Manchester, UK
**Album:** "Breaking the Fourth Wall" (Earache)
**Web:** beecher-online.com
**Manchester is to blame for:** The Smiths, Oasis and The Stone Roses.

Beecher's debut full-length from 2003, "Breaking the Fourth Wall", has been re-released on Earache, and for good reason. This British band smokes like Converge meets early Cave In, and that is not a comparison to throw around lightly. It doesn't get more vital than this. Features vocalizing that dominates the sing-song and the scream, Beecher would hold down and forcefully rape Oasis. Hard.




## Colossus

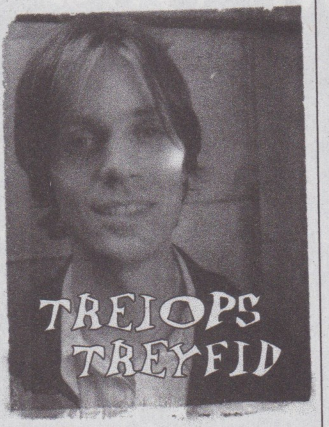
**From:** England
**New album:** "West Oaktown" (OMM)
**Web:** om-records.com
**Tourmates in October:** Lyrics Born
**Not to be confused with:** Colossus, the German metal band

The English are often revered for both their depressing weather and their annoying accents. Why can't everyone speak American? C'mon! Ignorance aside, Colossus, aka Charles Tate, is a huge English bastard. Dude is like seven feet tall... and he's white, so you know what that means. His music taste is somewhere between hip hop and jazz-hop (like a stronger Jazzanova) and he has as much soul as Roy Ayers, only Charles can actually catch a cab in New York. How fucked up is that? Not to be a name dropping motherfucker, but either of his two latest CDs ("West Oaktown" is actually a double issue in a single package - the original and the included, remixed twin) could be music fodder for at least half of the heads who are into groups like Digable Planets. If DP made every song like Colossus's "The Tribute" they'd be more famous then God.

**Origins:** (conceptually) Egypt
**Tours:** Behemoth, Hate Eternal, Napalm Death, Morbid Angel
**Behold:** "Annihilation of the Wicked" (Relapse)
**Web:** nile-catacombs.net
**Stats:** The Nile River's average discharge is 300 million cubic metres per day. Heh, discharge.

Death metal done correctly. The kind that has enough personality and dimension, that one doesn't have to have a closet full of black tshirts with illegible band names to enjoy Nile. Formed in 1993, this is their 4th full length so you know this is razor sharp. Gone are some of the more untraditional ethnic flavorings and middle eastern sounds. This newest is a pummeling downwardly dramatic death metal. It's brooding, textured, abrasively beautiful and heavy handed like your least favorite uncle. A three piece (!) with superior brutality in musicianship with an obsession with Egypt. The lyrics, imagery and general song inspirations come from singer Karl Sanders and bandmates fascination of all things associated with Egypt, except Brendan Fraser.

**Lives:** LA via DC
**Tours:** Doesn't
**Audio Uniqueness:** "Feelings of Unreality" (Postfact)
**Website:** treiops.com
**Resume:** Was a member of Pitchblende




Treiops Treyfid is more of an artist making music than an actual bread and butter musician. While all songs on this, his second, solo endeavor are credited to Treiops, there is a crew of contributors in the performance and the mixing. Combined with Treiops' already scattered approach to indie rock, this gives the songs individual personalities, which mirrors the fractured thought processes of the architect. While generally falling into an indie rock approach (carving bass lines, clean guitars, textured keys, thoughtful lyrics), any given moment can lead to a tangent to anywhere, reveling in its choice of production, but still maintaining some sense of song structure. Catchy, unique beats and melodies present themselves often and it doesn't take long to feel the charm of the creator through his art, both lyrically, sonically and through the image if you take the journey to see more. 'You may flip out." says Treiops.

**From:** New Jersey
**Tours:** Not right now
**Complex listen:** "Self-Titled" EP (Imagine It)
**Web:** myspace.com/thebinding
**Band says it sounds like:** A prison gang rape
**Modern Fix says it sounds like:** Complex and abrasive math noise rock

Stomping, hair-pulling, throat scraping, finger blistering, 26 guitar parts per movement type songs. There is an occasional awkward groove running underneath the chaos, and it's those moments of tangibility one needs to hold on to tightly, as the ride will surely spin a listener off in another direction a fraction of a breakdown later. Stop, start, stutter, pause, maybe, blast beat, blast beat, blast beat. All while this sweet little elf of a girl named Lilly Rao peels paint with her raspy rage of vocals. Math rock guitar trickery supreme. Guitarists Coats and Piccolo get their merit badges in noise rock precision. Mine ears bleed and I'm thankful for the jagged warmth it brings.

# AVENGED SEVENFOLD

## A Modern Day Take On Babylon

**by Jason Schreurs**

When it comes to the faux-metal punk/hardcore bands worshipping their Iron Maiden records, many have little to no patience for it. So it's always been a bit of a shock how much of an exception Avenged Sevenfold is, considering they are one of the biggest perpetrators of the spliced-up combo of punk and metal. Now that every band and their dog are "going metal", the boys in Avenged Sevenfold have decided to try something a little different on their major label debut, "City of Evil" (Warner Bros). Gone are the anguished screams from singer M. Shadows (he shredded his vocal chords to the point of surgery last year) and replacing them is a rocked-out swagger and croon. Similarly, the songs have become less about masturbating to early Maiden and more about good old fashioned rock and roll. Knowing Shadows' fascination with Axl Rose and all things Guns And Roses (some of this new album sounds eerily like Velvet Revolver) longtime fans of the band might be a little confused. But most are inexplicably fascinated by Avenged Sevenfold, in the same way they'd be compelled to stop and look at a 10-car pile-up on the interstate. I recently chatted with Shadows about the new album and tried not to let on that his band equates well with a multi-car wreck.

**You guys are on a major label now and seem to be on the brink of becoming huge. How do you feel about that?**

I feel excited about it. We're not one of those bands that tries to do everything we can to stay small and stay underground. We're just making music and we signed with Warner Brothers because we knew that was a good way to get our CDs in more stores and into the hands of more kids. We're not an elitist band, we're just writing the music we want to write, and if it gets big, that's where we want to be. We want as many people to enjoy our music as possible.

**Which city does the title of the record, "City of Evil" refer to?.**

We wrote this song called 'The Beast & the Harlot,' which is about the fall of Babylon from the Book of Revelations, and we related it to a modern day city, like a Las Vegas, or LA, or New York, kind of a modern day take on Babylon. We wrote this song and then the album cover came and it had a modern day city with our logo kinda jumping out at you, and "City of Evil" just sounded like the right name for the thing.

**I know you have a lot of younger fans, maybe some who haven't heard a lot of your influences, but what do older people that grew up on Maiden and Guns N' Roses think about the band?**

The response we've had from older people is that it's fucking refreshing and they are glad someone is making music like this again. They think it's a breath of fresh air because they are sick of having to deal with bands that are all screaming. There's a whole new breed of bands that are completely unoriginal and are just copying bands that are around today.

**You have a lot more vocal range on this album.**

I think there's tons of personality and texture on this one. I worked hard to develop my singing and move away from screaming. We just have layers and layers of vocal harmonies, whether it's a swagger or a full-out belt, or I'm singing things clean or distorted, we just made sure there were tons of things to sink your teeth into. You hear Axl Rose singing 'Bad Obsession' then he goes to something like 'Welcome to the Jungle' then something like 'Rocket Queen' and you have all of these different vocal textures that make up different tastes to the band and that's really important. So we tried to do that with this record.

> I think we're always nice to kids, but in our own personal lives we do what we want to do.

**You have the same vocal coach as Axl. So do you have any insider tips on whether Guns N' Roses' "Chinese Democracy" record will ever see the light of day?**

My vocal coach says the record is pretty much done and it's an amazing record. I think it's just up to Axl. He's kind of a depressed person, from what I've heard, and he's probably really sketched out because it's been so long. It's gotta be scary releasing an album after this long.

**Rock and roll has always been about excess and self-indulgence. Sex, drugs, and rock and roll. Do you guys consider yourselves positive role models for your fans? On the Warped Tour, there are lots of impressionable kids. Do you try to set a good example?**

I don't want it to be a shitty thing to say, but really we're just living for ourselves, we're doing our music for ourselves. I think we're always nice to kids, but in our own personal lives we do what we want to do. We play the music we want to play, and we live our lives the way want we want to live them. People can take a positive from that. I think a lot of kids should start living their lives they way they want to, instead of how someone else thinks they should. But we're really not up there preaching to kids about who they should vote for or what they should or shouldn't do. We believe in people doing what they want to do in life and making themselves happy, because that's what we do with our own lives.

www.avengedsevenfold.com

2005 "City of Evil" (Warner)
2003 "Waking the Fallen" (Hopeless)
2002 "Sounding the Seventh Trumpet" (Hopeless)

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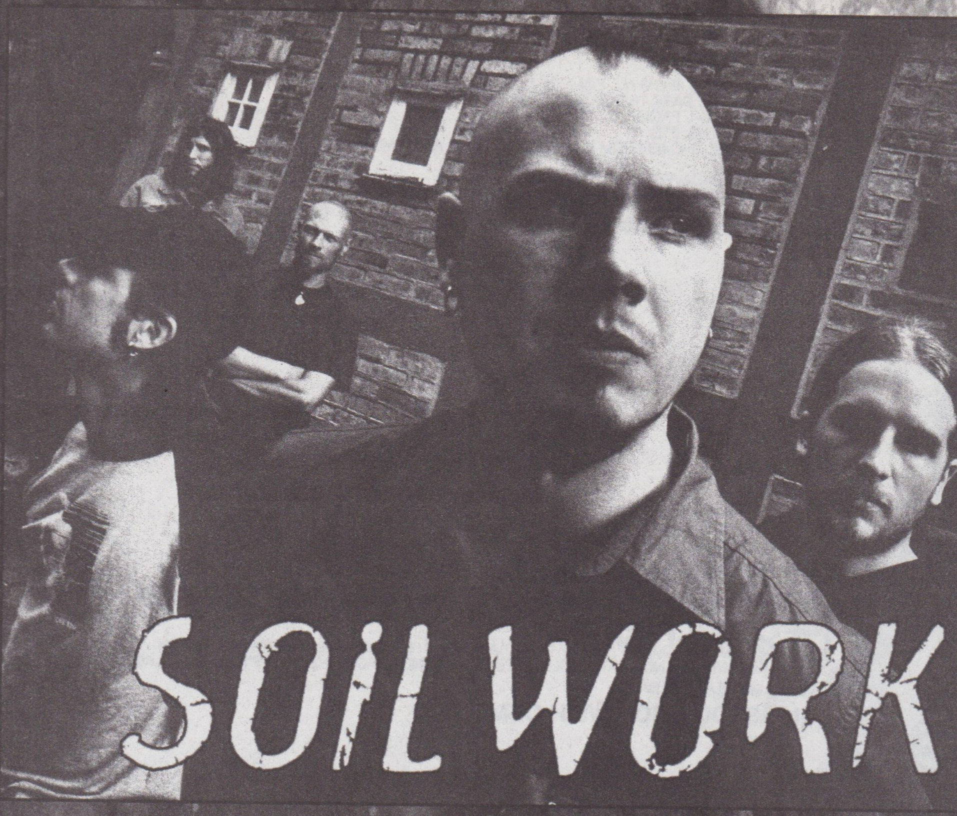



# SOILWORK

**by John Adams**

Founded nearly 10 years ago under the moniker Inferior Breed, the group now known as Soilwork have returned for their 7th release entitled "Stabbing the Drama" (Nuclear Blast). Their new record finds the group at the top of their game with an album that is a true summation of their sound. It blends the abrasiveness and brutality of their earlier works with the more melodic and anthemic elements of their recent releases. With a vicious new record, their first headlining tour in the United States already underway, and a coveted spot on this summer's Ozzfest, these strapping young Swedes are becoming very high profile.

Bjorn "Speed" Strid (Vocals) was bound to a rickety chair with bailing twine and forced to answer questions for us.

**Why do they call you Speed? Do you do a lot of speed?**

Not really. It comes back from the school days when I got introduced to more extreme metal and I only liked the fast stuff.

**You guys took a little more time between albums this time around.**

We don't really write songs on tour, we write in between. We feel good about having a short period of time to write songs. That's when the best songs come up.

**You and only you just shot a video for the album's title track "Stabbing the Drama". Were the other guys pissed that they didn't get to be in the video?**

No, they fucking hate to record videos.

**I heard you almost caught fire a few times in the process of recording this video?**

Yeah, it was very interesting. I was a little skeptic in the beginning about only having me in the video, but the director convinced me, and we said, "Yeah sure lets try it." It's something that stands out. Usually metal videos are five angry guys standing in a warehouse with chains all over the place. This video is pretty intense, even though its only one person. The basic idea is me standing in the middle of this burning inferno, like a burning car wreck with people throwing diesel on the cars. There were these huge ass fucking flames coming up like a meter behind me. I almost caught fire several times.

**Now you guys tour a ton and you are married. It's gotta be hard being on the road all the time. Don't you worry about her banging the pool boy while your away? Does she worry about you with groupies?**

It happens, do you want to talk to her?

**Sure put her on (after 30 second pause he puts his wife on the phone)**

Wife: Hello

**How do you keep a leash on your man when he's on the road? Don't you worry about him with all the groupies and what not?**

Wife: (laughs) I don't worry about it. I think its rock and roll... I don't care!

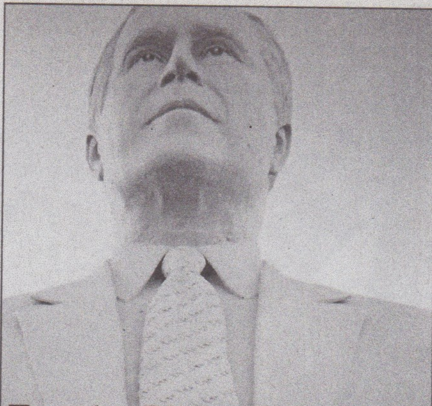
**Do you guys have phone sex and stuff like that? Do you look at pictures of each other while you pleasure yourselves?**

Wife: (lots of laughing) Yeah... it happens.

www.soilwork.org

2005 "Stabbing the Drama" (Nuclear Blast)
2003 "The Early Chapters" (Listenable)
2003 "Figure Number Five" (Nuclear Blast)
2002 "Natural Born Chaos" (Nuclear Blast)
2001 "A Predator's Portrait" (Nuclear Blast)
2000 "The Chainheart Machine" (Listenable)
1998 "Steelbath Suicide" (Listenable)





## Empty Silos Echo War

**From:** New York
**Latest:** "Inner Working Mechanics of a Failed Construct with Puritan Cement" (Rok Lok)
**Web:** emptysilos.com
**Abandoned silo:** The website www.triggur.org/silo/ has a full photograph tour of a decommissioned, underground military complex and silo.

It's safe to say that there is nothing unappreciable about the manly veracity beneath the jeans of Snake Plissken. After all, he's a prisoner, a decorated ex-soldier AND he's got a motherfucking eye patch. A nylon eye patch, which is far more durable then your regular synthetic models, easy to clean after it's stained with dead hooker blood and shit. And like a good eye patch, the durability of droning, apocalyptic prog stoner jams is only truly appreciated by long, sedated headphone sessions. And who is behind the doomful but hospitable indie rock that is Empty Silos Echo War? Nobody you'd recognize from other projects, but that's good... why? Because those half wits (you know who I'm talking about) spend their entire lives getting hand jobs because of that one good band they played in for seven years, and bands like Empty Silos Echo War sit in their basement eating pizza, smoking weed and fucking jamming like Snake creeping across town towards the 69th street bridge. Slow, brooding and with an eye patch.

## My Fate

**Lives:** In Finland
**Tours:** In Finland
**Latest music:** "Kill The Light" (Self-Released)
**Latest music you can find:** "Happiness is Fiction" (Crash)
**Web:** myfateband.net
**Amazing fact:** None of the band members names can be pronounced with an English tongue.

Taking the grasp of melody from many of their Euro-metal peers and wrapping it in nu-metal guitar crunch is the specialty of My Fate. The band stomps across hard rock territories with the baritone howling vocals of Vilho Rajal, gets in a fight with some hardcore transitions and tosses in some speedy thrash riffage when things start to get too mired down and dramatic (My Fate rides the line). Rajal can match the intensity shifts with a growling low raspy bark and shout to offset the smoother low end of his vocals. With a musical range centered around the bands ability to soften the edge and grind up the melody, the biggest thing holding the band back is lack of visibility outside their own scene.

**From:** Omaha, Nebraska
**Album:** "The Hate Yourself Change" (Crank!)
**Web:** nevadinova.net
**Super Hero Ally:** Some guy named Conor whose super power is Bright Eyes.
**Arch Nemesis:** The Omaha indie spotlight that can't seem to find them.

"She keeps me close to her heart in a locket / I keep her close to my cock on a picture in my pocket" sums up the gist of Jake Bellows' surprising poetic lyrics dripped over Neva Dinova's ambient infused folky-indie rock. These five started out strong but seemed to be left behind when The Faint, Bright Eyes and Saddle Creek exploded onto the nation. A strong base in Omaha was not enough to carry them nationwide. But with superfriend Conor's help, Bellows recorded a split that jumped into critics laps like a playful kitten. Still reeling from the momentum, Neva Dinova recorded "The Hate Yourself Change" which features harsher lyrics over sweeter melodies and stands ready give king Conor a run for his thrown.

## Mice Parade

**Location:** New York
**Album:** "Bem-Vinda Vontade" (Bubblecore)
**Web:** bubblecore.com
**Inside scoop:** Kristin of Múm sung on several of the tracks.
**Translation for 'Bem-Vinda Vontade':** in Portuguese it roughly means "Welcome, will."

This album feels a lot like The Sea and Cake kickin' it with Múm in a field of flowers. It's what sparkling stars sound like when you are dreaming. There is still an ebb and flow to the record; slightly harder qualities can be found within layers of the music. Though Adam Pierce is the backbone of the album, he had a lot of notable accompaniment in the recording studio.

**Based:** Los Angeles
**Tours:** in a stinky van
**Music:** "Road Warrior" (Punkcore)
**Web:** havocpunx.com
**Irrelevant fact:** The Havoc have 1855 friends at myspace

A few punk chords and an attitude always goes a long way. The Havoc sneer out the punk rocks with the proper old school influences (G.B.H., Discharge, Black Flag) and race through each track with just enough sloppy momentum to make it rock. This is the kind of punk that exists because it has to, like The Havoc wouldn't know what else to do. Absolutely nothing new musically, but if you can't be original, might as well be rocking and deliver with an attitude that makes the music seem like it matters.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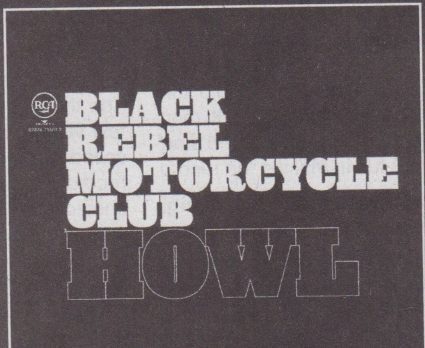


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# Kinski

**by Gordon Downs**

On their second full-length recording "Alpine Static" for the Seattle based Sub Pop Record label, the superb instrumental quartet known as Kinski find themselves in the midst of weaving heady and hard driving rock melodies along with the sonic expansiveness that can be found on their prior recordings. With a graceful nod to classic rock and an obvious homage to Black Sabbath on "Alpine Static" - Kinski have steadily carved a comfortable niche for themselves and seemed poised to ride that sonic wave all the way to Sweden! Guitarist Chris Martin took a few minutes to sit down with Modern Fix to talk about "Alpine Static" and about a much overlooked band from the seventies called, Kebnekajse.

**The new album is an incredible piece of work. In terms of contemporary instrumental rock, no one really comes close to what you guys are doing. When you were recording "Alpine Static" could you feel a sense of entering a certain territory where most bands will never tread?**

That's really nice of you to say that. We felt that the material was pretty good but we were working with a new engineer (and co-producer) so we were a little nervous about how everything would turn out. But after we finished tracking we felt more confident with how things were sounding and started to relax and have more fun in making the record.

**"Alpine Static" seems destined to be a high school and dormitory hit for the stoner and blotter/mushroom demographic? Any thoughts on how your music is being perceived through the mind of a student that's totally "fried?"**

I would love to drive by a high school parking lot and hear our record coming out of some stoner kids' Camaro. We kind of structured the record so that you could rock out for awhile and then sit on top of your car and stare at a tree.

**In your opinion, what's the defining difference between "Alpine Static" and "Airs Above Your Stations?"**

The main difference is that "Alpine Static" sounds much more like we do live. It's a more direct and immediate record. And it's more fun.

**We kind of structured the record so that you could rock out for awhile and then sit on top of your car and stare at a tree.**

**It's been two years since you released "Airs Above Your Stations." Aside from touring, what has Kinski been up to?**

The three guitars players in Kinski (Chris, Lucy, Matthew) played some improv shows and used the recordings of these shows to make the record "Don't Climb On and Take the Holy Water". That record is not for everyone but might appeal to people who like the driftier, more experimental side of Kinski. That was the main thing we did during those two years, we played a lot and tried to reinvent ourselves.

**Any albums, (new or old) that you could recommend to the readers of Modern Fix?**

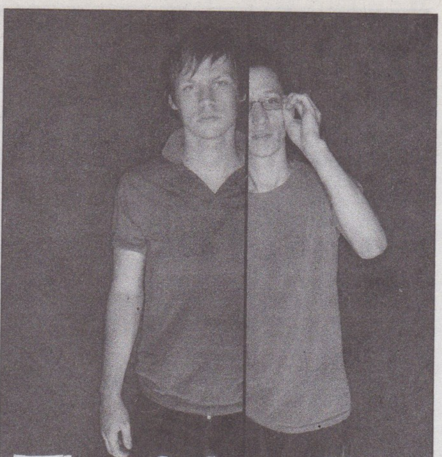
The thing I've been listening to most the past few weeks is a Swedish band from the 70's called Kebnekajse. I just have their first record so far but it is fantastic. Everyone should hear (Mexican band) Los Dug Dug's album "Smog". A psych guitar masterpiece. As far as new records, I heard a great thing by a band named Psychic Paramount called "Gamelan into the Mink Supernatural".

**Does Kinski have a message for the children?**

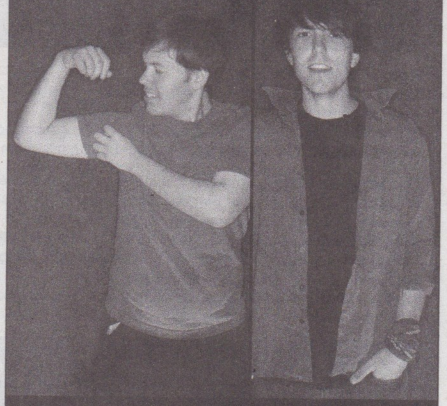
Grow up.

www.subpop.com

2005 "Alpine Static" (Sub Pop)
2004 "Don't Climb on and take the Holy Water" (Strange Attractors)
2003 "Airs Above Your Stations" (Sub Pop)
2003 "Kinski/Acid Mother's Temple" (Sub Pop)
2001 "Be Gentle With The Warm Turtle" (Pacifico)
1999 "Space Launch For Frenchie" (Strange Attractors)



# The Mae Shi



**Home:** Los Angeles
**Latest Diagnosis:** "Heartbeeps" (5 Rue Christine)
**Web:** mae-shi.com
**Symptoms:** Muscle Spasms, rapid heart rate, heavy perspiration.

The Mae Shi is Ezra Buchla, Brad Breeck, and brothers Tim and Jeff Byron. Their last album had 33 songs and didn't break 40 minutes. At 10 songs, Heartbeeps still barely breaks 15, but is definitely more cohesive than their schizophrenic previous release. Think Black Eyes, Deerhoof, ProTools and a huge pile of cocaine.

# Opiate For The Masses

**From:** Phoenix, AZ
**Tours:** Ministry, KMFDM, The Bled, Avenged Sevenfold
**Music:** "The Spore" (Warcon)
**Web:** opiateforthemasses.com
**The name:** Is derived from a concept philosopher Karl Marx used to describe organized religion.

A scattered range keeps every corner turned something new with OFM. Generally harnessing an agitated rock/metal/pop approach, the influences are visible. Some Marilyn Manson, a little Tool, some Static-X, a nod to Godhead plus their own fractured take on song structures makes OFM one of those mash-up type bands. While struggling for their own identity, these are some crafted pieces of agro-pop-metal. There is always a hook, but the complexity of structures gives mood and tempo, anger and retreat. The band is comfortable both in attack in harshed synth rock mode as well as the smoothed out croon over softer melody approach (which is used heavily in the latter half of "The Spore"). With so many touch points to other good music going on here, the crossover potential should be there if the listener doesn't get too distracted and forget what band they are listening to.

# SUZUKITON

**From:** Richmond, VA
**Tours:** Mastodon, Dysrhythmia, Jumbo's Killcrane
**Release:** "Service Repair Handbook" (Crucial Blast)
**Web:** suzukiton.com
**It's all about Pussy:** The Alabama Thunder kind

Finding the crossroads between math rock and stoner/slow doom rock, instrumentalists (that means 'no singer' for the slower kids) Suzukiton come crawling from the deep south. When Alabama Thunderpussy members feel like doing something else, this is what they do. Slow burn, semi-complex, heavy as a metal brick of dark matter rock and roll. It rocks hard, so if you are just so over that whole 'singer' thing, but still like your rock on the metalish side, this goes well with most any brand of cheap beer. Weed is optional but recommended.

# Maspyke

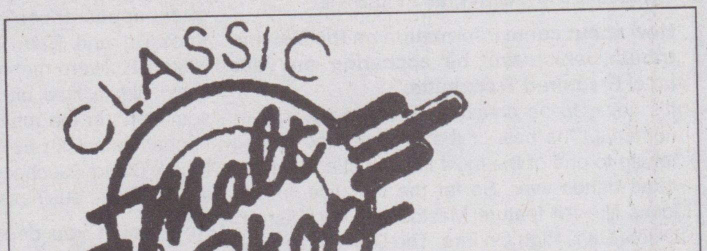
**From:** Springfield, MA
**Latest:** "Static" (ABB)
**Web:** abbrecords.com
**Six degrees:** Dr. Mangus Pyke, a British scientist, appeared in the song and video for "She Blinded Me With Science" by Thomas Dolby. Thomas played keyboards on the "Pyromania" album by Def Leppard. Their guitarist, Phil Collen, played guitar for the Sam Kinison song "Wild Thing". The music video included members of Mötley Crüe, who were signed to Elektra, Maspyke's first label.

It's good that Mos Def is busy - the chances of him getting back with Talib Kweli for a true Black Star run are slim to none, and that leaves more then enough room for Maspyke. Not that they're a clone or knockoffs; if anything, the three member crew, built with Roddy Rod, Hanif Jamiyl and Tableek are stronger as a trio then any working duo. Part street, part beat, their debut "Static" is at worst, a very edible 13 track album. At best, a favorite for best hip hop album of the year, which is probably why they've toured with just about everyone important to the scene (Tribe Called Quest, EPMD, Dilated Peoples, Nore, etc). Catch them this winter.

# The Double

**Location:** NYC
**Album:** "Loose In The Air" (Matador)
**Web:** matadorrecords.com
**For Those Who Are About To Get Wet:** For all you cocksuckers who love two piece rock duos, The Double is actually made up of four dudes. . .you stupid fucks.

NYC's The Double make their Matador debut with "Loose In the Air." Pushed by spooking vocals and the blended keystrokes of Jacob Morris, the Double drive behind by the terrifically noisy guitar of Donald Beaman and patient percussionist Jeff McLeod. Their songs float and plunge with originality like a hurricane kite dancing to a 1960s circus soundtrack on mushrooms hosted by The Doors, ushered by Pink Floyd, and catered by the Animals. With moments of paranoia, these catchy songs offer a refreshing organic change from the cliche.



# The Alter Boys

by James Wright

When members of Mushroomhead and Dog Fashion Disco decided to start a side project during a tour with '80s shock rockers W.A.S.P, none of them would have ever imagined it would take 4 years before the material would finally see the light of day.

With eight members, The Alter Boys – comprised of Jason Popson (Vocals), Todd Smith (Vocals), Craig Martini (Bass), Mike Martini (Guitars), Matt Rippetoe (Keyboards) Jeff Siegel (Keyboards), Eric Matthews (Drums) and Viva La Bam/Jackass star Ryan Dunn (Cognac/Additional Vocals) – are like a lounge band on a bad acid trip. Ex-Mushroomhead frontman Jason Popson talks some shit.

**You were in Mushroomhead for nearly a decade, why did you choose to leave after so many years?**
Leaving Mushroomhead wasn't really a choice, it was just something I had to do. At the time the band was planning a long tour, and at the same time I had just started a record label and my father, who I had been very distant from was diagnosed with cancer. It just seemed like the right thing to do was to repair the damage between he and I before it was too late. As for the label, my first release (Meshuggah's "I" EP) had just come out and I was about to put out my second release right as Mushroomhead wanted to tour. I just felt like I owed my father and the bands that trusted me with their records my full attention.

**What do you think of their decision to continue with a new frontman?**
I'm glad they carried on. We're still all close friends and they understand that I did what I had to do. As for Waylon, he's a talented and nice guy. I sincerely wish them all the best. On a side note I'm still active with (216), which includes Skinny, Gravy, and Pig Benis.

**How about some information on the Melvins tribute, which will be appearing on your label Fractured Transmitter?**
It's going to be amazing. The line up is phenomenal. The best of the underground paying tribute to one of the most influential and underrated bands ever. So far the tentative line-up looks like it'll feature Mastodon, Dog Fashion Disco, CKY, High On Fire, The Dillinger Escape Plan, Strapping Young Lad and Eyehategod.

**At what point did The Alter Boys come together?**
Todd and I were on tour together in 2001 (with W.A.S.P. believe it or not) and we talked about doing a project together just for fun. We slowly assembled material whenever there was time between Mushroomhead and Dog Fashion Disco, but it wasn't until Ryan slapped us around that we got the damn thing done.

**It wasn't until Ryan slapped us around that we got the damn thing done.**

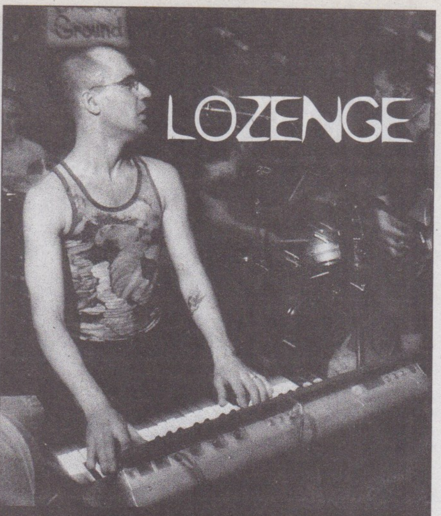
**How did Viva La Bam/Jackass star Ryan Dunn come to be involved?**
I've known Ryan for a few years and he truly is one of my best friends. He heard The Alter Boys demo and said "What's wrong with you assholes? Why haven't you released this?" So he was the kick in the ass the band needed. Then he became a member of the band and the only shareholder in the label.

**The album also features guest appearances by Johnny Knoxville, Bam Margera and Saturday Night Live's "The Naked Trucker", how did you come to score such high profile guest appearances?**
Knoxville and Bam were through Ryan. The Naked Trucker I met at a show in LA and got to know him a little bit and we discussed doing something in the future. I had no idea it would happen as quickly as it did, but I'm very grateful. I think David Koechner is one of the best entertainers in the business.

**How would you describe The Alter Boys to someone who has never heard them?**
It's a beach party on 3 mile island. "The Book of Revelations" with an American Bandstand soundtrack.

www.fracturedtransmitter.com

2005 "The Exotic Sounds Of..." (Fractured Transmitter)



# LOZENGE

**Homeland:** Chicago
**Created by:** combining the cuticles of Hunter S. Thompson and a teaspoon of flat Mountain Dew into a Petri-dish
**Latest:** "Undone" (Sick Room)
**Web:** mylozenge.com
**Wiki sez:** A lozenge is a rhombus which usually has two corners pointing up and down that are farther apart than the corners pointing sideways.

Most people like surprises. Scratch that; most people like GOOD surprises, like finding a $20 on the ground, or not getting diarrhea after a night of coke binging. Bad surprises, on the other hand, aren't fun. A bad surprise could be feeling testicles on the girl you just spent 10 minutes making out with, or maybe getting regular fries when you specifically ordered curly. testicles or not, Lozenge is a good surprise. Is Sleepytime Gorilla Museum too normal for you? Stick some Lozenge in. These primordial humans (or are they half monkey?) play such abstract rock that if you looked up abstract rock in the dictionary, it would NOT say "see Lozenge". That's how abstract they are. Multiple drummers playing... drums and large hunks of metal. A saxophone. Accordion. Frying pan. Keyboard. Screaming. This shit is insane, and you better get on the fucking crazy wagon now before they murder you and assimilate your empty skull into their drum kits.

# TRIPLE THREAT

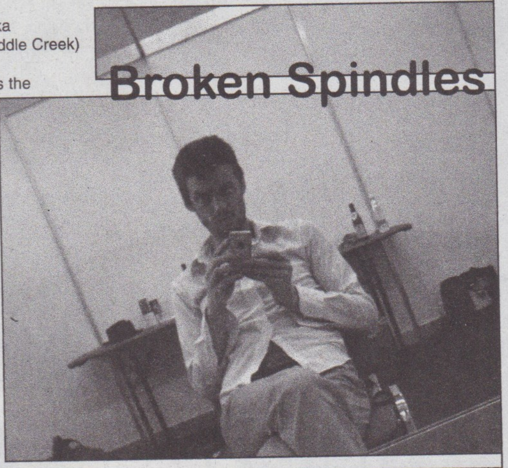
**From:** New Jersey
**EP:** "A New Chapter" (Livewire)
**Web:** triplethreatxxx.com
**Name-drop-athon:** Ex-members of Mouthpiece, Hands Tied, The Killing Flame, The Suppression Swing, Face the Enemy, and many more.
**History:** From the annals of straight edge hardcore.
**Defining moment:** A cover of Black Flag's "Fix Me."

Bringing back the 'core, this is the new band from Mouthpiece, er, mouthpiece Tim McMahon and a host of other '90s hardcore alumni. The trouble here is living up the expectations of the members' former bands, but somehow Triple Threat emerge from the cloud of rubble, X's Jiffy marked on their weathered hands. Balls-out hardcore ain't the norm these days, and thankfully their ain't a damn hint of metal in the band.

**Lives:** In Montreal
**Tours:** By himself
**Latest Music:** "Tie Your Noose" (Bomp)
**Web:** marksultan.com
**Pedigree:** BBQ = Mark Sultan who was in Les Sexareenos and The Spaceshits.

He uses foot pedals for a kick and a snare, hangs a tambourine around his neck, all the while playing the guitar and singing. It's revved up pre-frat 50's / early 60's party music. It's all low-fi and recorded live to make it sound 'old'. He lives in a garage in Montreal and eats buckets of Poutine (a Canadian gut bomb of French fries, cheese curds and hot gravy). But it makes him rock out in a crazy one man band of sassy old rock and blues numbers that are pure BBQ, plus one Stones tune.

## Broken Spindles

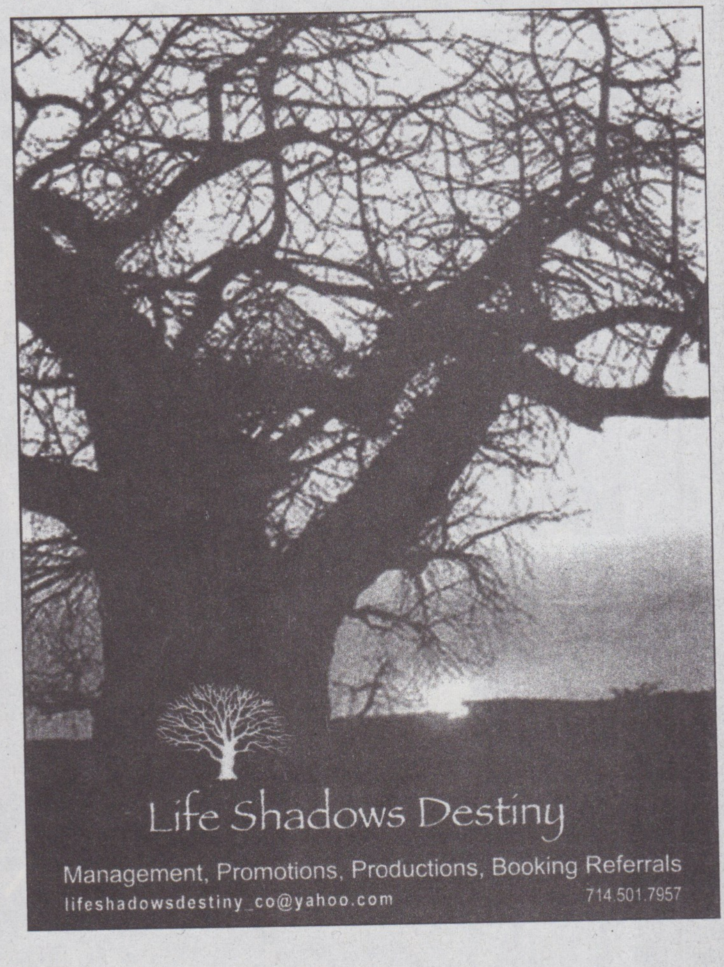


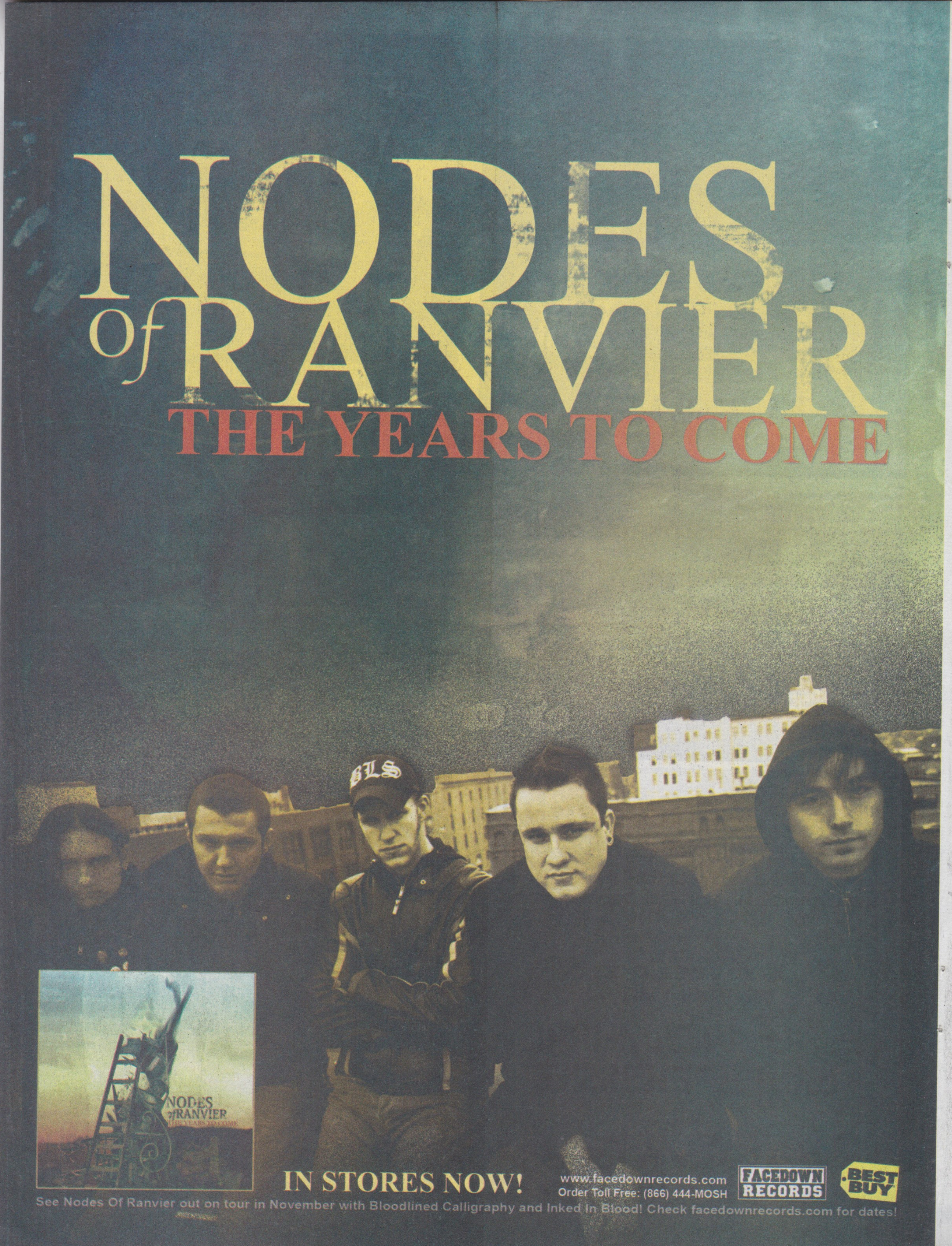
**Location:** Omaha, Nebraska
**Debut:** "Inside/Absent" (Saddle Creek)
**Web:** saddle-creek.com
**Extra info:** Joel Peterson is the bassist for The Faint.

This album has a dark and very creepy vibe. Though some minor elements are the same; it has no aural connection to The Faint. The album has a new wave industrial feel to it, yet there is a hollowness in the sound. Its what "unplugged" electronic dance music might sound like. This record might have been better off without lyrics. They tend to be banal and because of this, they stick out in a rather unusual way.

**Actually from:** Ireland
**Latest release:** "Cashed Out on Culture" (Punk Core)
**Web:** bloodorwhiskey.com
**Historical note:** The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association was founded after being inspired by Martin Luther King and the battle for civil rights in America.
**And also:** Fuck Britain.

More often then not, a band is compared in the press to prestigious acts that they could never even dream of sounding remotely similar to. Surprising, that's not the case with Blood and Whiskey - they can actually sound like a third of the Pogues, Flogging Molly and Stiff Little Fingers, a refreshing mix of Irish punk without all the boot-stomping homoeroticism found in bands like Dropkick Murphy's. And what do you know, they even dragged 'ol Cait O'Riordan out from whatever shanty she was sleeping in for some guest vocals on their latest album. You remember Cait? She was the original bassist of the Pogues who left the legendary band to put Elvis Costello's old, wrinkly penis inside her. They divorced years later.





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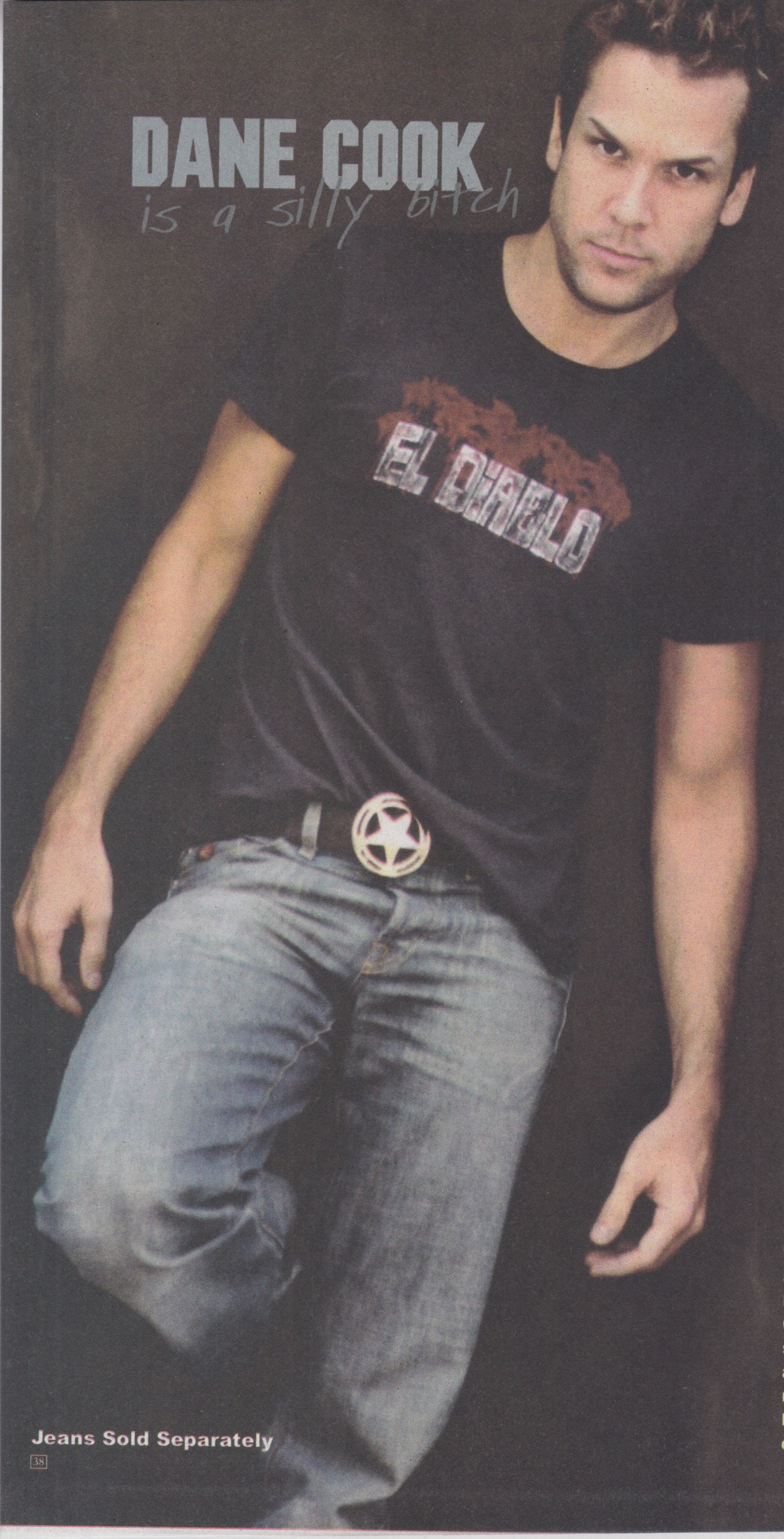
# DANE COOK

*is a silly bitch*




Jeans Sold Separately

by Gordon Downs

Every so often, a comedian will come to the surface of popular culture and encapsulate an era and define the time, in a manner of speaking. And Dane Cook may very well be the comedian who shall carry America's disenchanted youth into this brave new millennium. While his exact age is unknown (some speculate he may be 33 years old) the facts about Cook are as solid as Cialis. He's been doing stand up comedy for fifteen years. He's been featured on TV from his appearances on the Tonight Show and the Late Show with David Letterman, as well as his many appearances on Comedy Central. His last album, "Harmful If Swallowed" was released in 2003 and established Cook as the comedian who would be king. In August, his second album, "Retaliation" debuted at Number Four on the Billboard top 200, surpassing Steve Martin as the highest charting comedian in motherfucking history. With Cook's larger than life fan base and the appeal of the albums packaging, it's a no brainer that his time to shine has finally arrived. A three disc affair, "Retaliation" contains two CD's worth of Cook doing prime stand up, while the third disc is a DVD containing a teaser for his recent comedy tour, "Tourgasm", unedited appearances from various Comedy Central hoo-ha's and all the crank phone calls Cook did with the Crank Yanker's squad of mental sodomites. I managed to catch Dane while he was relaxing at home in the Hollywood Hills recently, and this is how our conversation went.

**Dane, what's your problem?**
Dane Cook: (laughing) I'll tell you something, I've got seven problems and you're five of them! That's actually a quote from my favorite heckle that I've ever gotten. That happened about four years ago at a club. A guy was sitting in the front row, he was hammered and he was just being really despondent and making little sounds to himself. I finally looked down at him and I go, "Dude, hey you're ruining the show," and he kinda glared up at me and he was looking all salty and I go, "What is your problem?" And he just stood up [with] a bottle in his hand and I think it freaked everybody out so everybody got dead quiet, and he goes, "I've got seven problems! And you're five of them!"

**What year did you graduate high school?**
1990. According to what I'm going to tell you right now. I'm a mystery dude. Everything is on the low-pro with me. You're gonna find like seven different ages if you look on the internet. I never tell my real age dude. I'm very JFK.

**Can you recall the first time you ever went on-stage at a comedy club, like at an open mic nite?**
David Cross used to host one at Catch A Rising Star in Harvard Square. I was hanging out in the crowd just to watch, and I was not supposed to go on stage, and what they would do is they would read the list of names from the stage of who was next. Then all of a sudden from on stage David Cross says, "Okay, where's Ernest Glenn? You're next, Ernest Glenn? Ya here?" and then he would make up a weird intro for you. But no Ernest Glenn was in the crowd, and after about two seconds I realized that and shot my hand up in the air, and he looked at me and said, "Are you Ernest Glenn?" And I said, "Yes I am." And that was my first set ever. I did five minutes, and it went great. I would do comedy every night, except for Holidays; I have a two or three year span in Boston where I never missed a night in comedy. I was just doing stand up, open mics, laundromats and Chinese food restaurants, every single night. So yeah, I know the world of the open mic.

**That's pretty wild man, serving up fresh comedy every night.**
My way is to go up and keep it raw. I like living in the fear moment on stage. You're on the cusp of, "This could all go away," you always live moment to moment in stand up. You're always constantly reassessing the crowd and what you're saying, it never ends, it never will end, that's stand up. It's a constant energy back and forth that you have to like.

**What about your first joke, can you remember that?**
The very first joke I ever did was about an article in the newspaper, and the headline said: "I Was Raped By A Snowman." So that was the first thing I talked about on stage. I was talking about the girl in court having to testify that she sucked his snowballs and that she was a snow-blower. It was just a wonderfully bad joke, but they were getting laughs.

**So it's your first night up and you're not even really prepared to do a set, and you dive into rape material?**
Yeah, I was opening the can right there. I was not going to just twirl the top, I was opening the can.

**The new album is fucking hilarious and you have an amazing flow when it comes to timing. What's your writing process like for jokes?**
I haven't physically written a note or anything comedically in about eight or nine years. I come from an improv background, the first four years I did sketches and all that shit. But when I started writing out jokes I became very frustrated, because of the speed at which my brain works. Especially on stage, I felt like I was molasses when I would try to actually see everything written. I knew that I liked to improvise, and I knew that when I saw bands or even certain comics. I wanted to give a crowd a feeling like this is happening right now. Those are the best fucking shows ever.

**How about chess? Do ya like playing chess?**
I'm a chess player, I love playing chess. And comedy, I structure it like chess because you have to always see ten moves ahead and remember what you did five moves ago.

**Do you toss a few back before you hit the stage?**
I've never had a drink of alcohol in my life. I never had a drink or a drug ever.

**What the fuck Dane?**
Dude, I'm a mutant. I'm a freak, I know. I'm in ballrooms my entire life and I've never even had a sip of alcohol in my life.

**What do you attribute that to?**
Not to take it too deep; but there's a moment in your life when you have the opportunity to get into all that, and I remember being really young and I had a friend in school who was kind of like the school stoner. I was hanging with him and a bunch of guys one day and my friend never offered me any drugs but his buddies started offering me some stuff, and I had an epiphany. This has nothing to do with who I am. I would be lying if thought I would enjoy drinking. I like feeling feelings. I like feeling pain, I like going through fear, joy and I don't like to put anything in my body that either enhances it or skews it. I wanna be as crystal clear on stage as I can.

**What's up with your military fan base? You seem to be quite popular with the US forces?**
Every day from Iraq, I receive thousands of emails that are just unbelievable. I got this letter a few days ago where it was like, "Hey listen man, I'm a marine and we were in a fire fight last night, and me and my guys threw "Harmful If Swallowed" on when we got back, and it just relaxed us and had us all laughing." I get letters from these guys in Baghdad, being like, "Got shot at, came back, listened to your CD thank you very much for making me feel like I'm home." You don't think about that when you start comedy.

**"Tourgasm" what can you tell me about this apocalyptic film?**
"Tourgasm" was thirty days, the entire month of April 2004. Twenty university dates, all five to ten thousand seaters. Right now we got four hundred hours worth of footage in the edit bay and we're just piecing it together. Hopefully for something that will be out in spring 2006.

**Is this gonna be a theatrical release or DVD only?**
Having looked at the footage and all the crazy shit that happened, I think it could be like a "Kings Of Comedy" type thing. But my goal for it would be to put out a great documentary. Like a ten hour documentary of what we went through out on the road. But now TV people are getting into it and it could end up on Comedy Central or TBS, or it could end up in theaters I dunno?

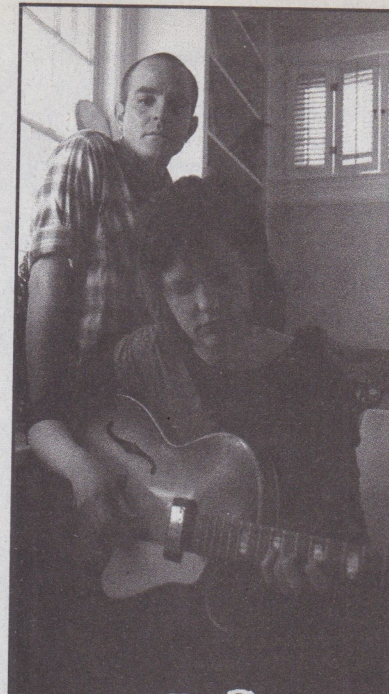
**How's that dude who fucked up his knee in the "Tourgasm" teaser?**
That's Robert Kelly, he's actually the guy I started doing improv with fifteen years ago. He's alright. He snapped his ACL and tore his MCL. He's walking on it and he's gonna be okay. He'll just never have any lateral movement again. He won't be able to play football.

**Does Dane Cook have a message for the children?**
A message? "Retaliation" is in stores now.

www.danecook.com

2005 "Retaliation" (Comedy Central)
2003 "Harmful If Swallowed" (Comedy Central)

## I like feeling feelings. I like feeling pain, I like going through fear, joy and I don't like to put anything in my body that either enhances it or skews it. I wanna be as crystal clear on stage as I can.



# Mary Timony

by Gordon Downs

In the early nineties Mary Timony fronted the notorious D.C. punk outfit Autoclave. And though Autoclave would only record a sparse amount of material and would disband after only a few years, the band is still a highly regarded and often referenced to this day. Timony would then go on to front one of the nineties favorite alternative "buzz bin" bands, Helium. Releasing all their recordings via Matador Records, Helium became one of the finest bands to emerge from that decade, casting Timony as a heroine figure to many "riot girls" across America and Europe. As the decade came to a close, so did Helium leaving Timony to concentrate on her own solo endeavors. Several years and solo albums later, Mary Timony can be found kicking out the jams on Lookout! Records with her latest album, "Ex Hex". Different from her previous solo albums which contained a very mystic and Lord of The Rings vibe to them, "Ex Hex" is Timony's return the rhythmic angular rock which Helium was known to create.

Before leaving for yet another tour, Mary Timony was kind enough to answer a few questions about her new album, switching record labels (ouch) and just exactly who takes care of Thisbee the cat while she's on tour.

**Matador Records seemed like a "home-base" for your recordings. Why did you change record labels and release "Ex Hex" via Lookout Records?**
I chose to work with Lookout! because I had always heard great things about working with them. I split ways with Matador in 2002.

**"Ex Hex" stands apart from your solo recordings as an album that has a similar vibe to a Helium album?**
Yes, I think so. I just felt like making music that rocked a little more, plus playing with Devin Ocampo really is a huge influence as far as making the music a little heavier, and more rhythmic.

**Why did Helium break up?**
We parted ways to do other projects that we wanted to do.

**You did a recent tour with Sleater-Kinney and a slew of other bands. How's touring the independent rock circuit in 2005, similar to touring in 1995?**
I can't answer the question about indie rock in general, but I'd have to say that my own experience is a little different, but mostly the same. The style of bands has changed. There are more indie labels. I am older. I don't know? It's really not that different actually.

**What are some of the essential items you need when on tour?**
Clothes, a toothbrush, music equipment, a van, a good map, time to rest and tea.

**What's your cats' name and whom do you leave her with when you go on tour?**
Her name is Thisbee and we usually get a friend to look after her while we are on tour.

**Does Mary Timony have a message for the children?**
Be true to yourself. Always try to go to bed before midnight. Take your vitamins.

www.marytimony.com

2005 "Ex Hex" (Lookout!)
2002 "The Golden Dove" (Matador)
2000 "Mountains" (Matador)

# The New Pornographers

by Gordon Downs

Since their 2000 debut, "Mass Romantic" The New Pornographers have had the indie spotlight on them. Their 2003 follow-up, "Electric Version" only amplified that light even brighter as their remarkable take on pop music circa now is undeniably some of the finest available since Thin White Rope graced the radio dial. On their third full length, "Twin Cinema" The New Pornographers are treading in familiar waters, though frontman Carl "AC" Newman is serving up some interesting melodies and rhythmic patterns this time around. To some folks, "Twin Cinema" may be a difficult album to identify with. To others, it's pure pop gold. I managed to catch up with Carl from his home in Vancouver, Canada just before a scheduled dinner engagement he had with America's favorite bald comedian, Mr. David Cross! You can catch Cross in action as he's featured in The New Pornographers latest video, "Use It."

**"Twin Cinema" is the third installation in the tantalizing discography of The New Pornographers. An album filled with catchy pop music, though it obviously stands drastically apart the previous album "Electric Version." Where are the hooks?**
I think this album has definitely got them. On this record I was kind of getting sick of the way I was writing. Because, in a way it's so easy to just give people what they want. It's so easy to give people something that has the right beat and has a certain kind of melody line, and I was really trying to screw with it. Being that I'm the guy who made it, "Twin Cinema" is kinda the record I like the most. There are little things about the album that are strange. There are a lot of songs that have weird time signatures and weird changes in them that aren't really that noticeable. There's a song on the record, "The Jessica Numbers" it's my favorite song, not because I think it's the catchiest song on the record but because I can't think of another song that it sounds like. The closest song I can think of is something from Jesus Christ Superstar. You just make the kind of record you want to hear. That's kind of what I did.

**Were any of the songs that are on "Twin Cinema" originally written for you recent solo album?**
There wasn't really anything that I started for "Slow Wonder" that I didn't end up using. There was one extra song [from "Slow Wonder"] that I knocked off the record and just made it an iTunes track, because I just didn't see where it fit on the record. There was one song, "Most Of Us Prizefighters" on "The Slow Wonder" which I meant to be on this record. Then I just started thinking, 'Fuck that. Why save songs? I can always write more. '

**How's the response of "Twin Cinema" been from your perspective?**
Being interviewed over a period of years and reading press about us, it gives you a little bit of perspective. When you have a constant barrage of people saying, 'This is just as great!' or 'This is just too strange, it's too weird.' Then you have people saying, 'This is more of the same.' I can just feel them coming at me at such a furious pace, that eventually I'm just like, 'Whatever.'

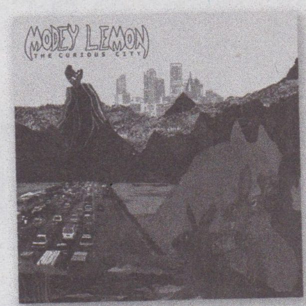
**Well Carl, with most of these hacks, when it comes down to it – they just really want to give you a hug. And I'm not blowing smoke up your ass.**
Really, you're not blowing smoke up my ass?

**C'mon Carl!**
Well, as long as you're not blowing coke up my ass. I actually need someone to blow coke up my ass now. I'm kind of like Stevie Nicks. I totally destroyed my septum.

www.thenewpornographers.com

2005 "Twin Cinema" (Mint/Matador)
2003 "Electric Version" (Mint/Matador)
2000 "Mass Romantic" (Mint/Matador)

# TWO NEW HIGH FLYING RELEASES FROM BIRDMAN

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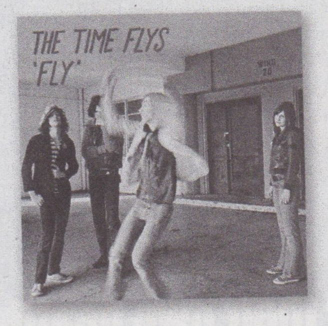


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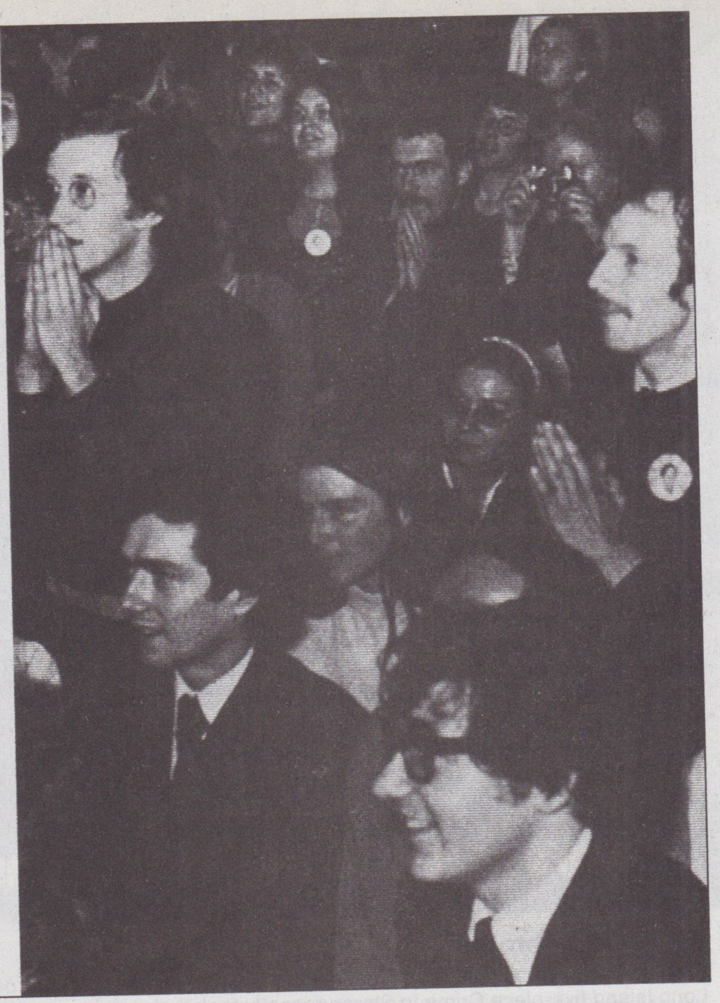

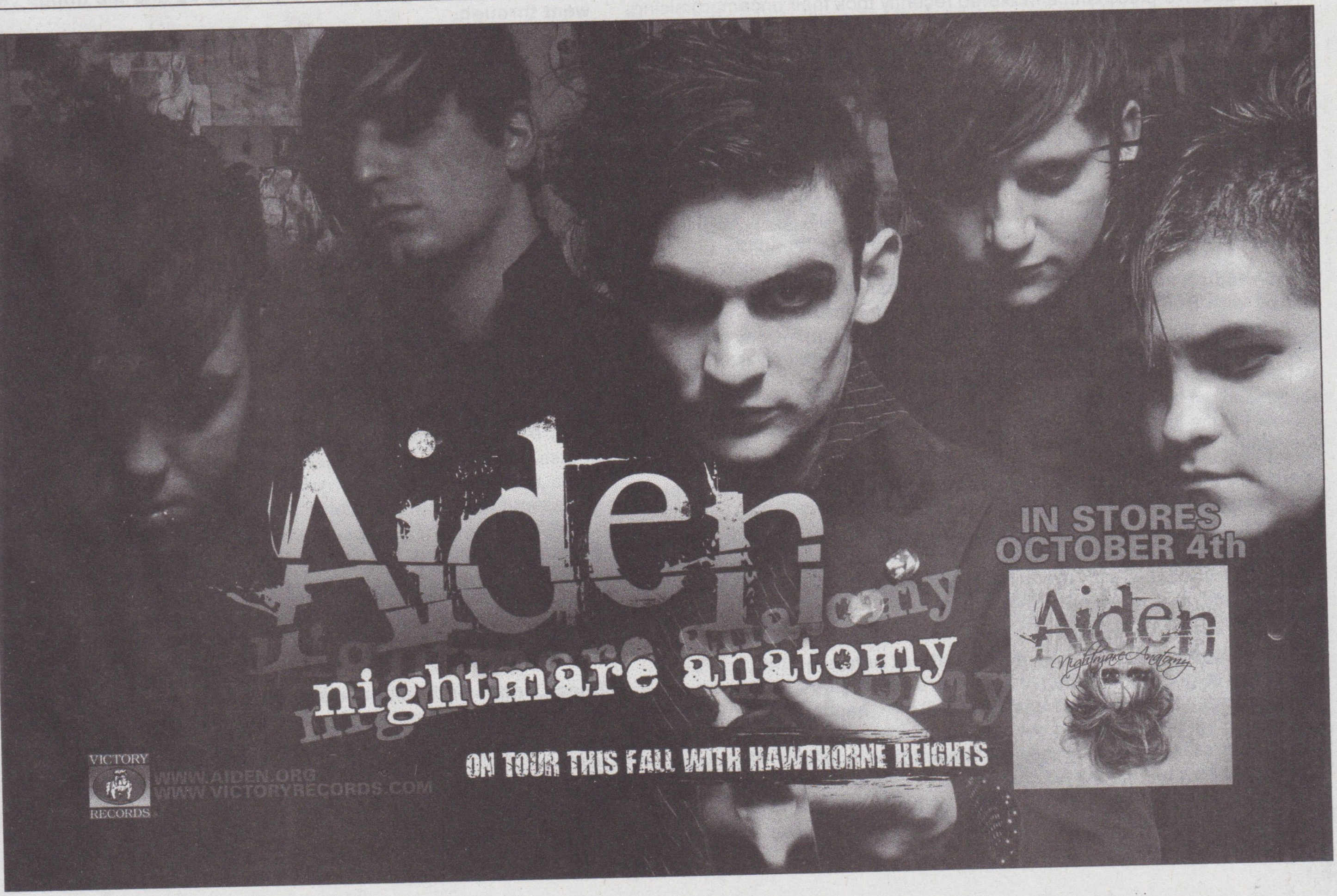

**There's no reason why people should have to pay for their own health.**

**by Jason Schreurs**

Cutting their teeth on Blackout Records imprint "Brightside", the energetic Long Island five-piece Crime In Stereo recently took their uncompromising, positive hardcore to Dexter Holland world after a fallout with their ex-label. Crime in Stereo recall the glory days of hardcore bands that had important, life-affirming things to say and left the tough-guy attitudes to the beefed-up posers. While too many bands are content to play up the gangsta image and raid their older brothers' closets in an effort to "metalize" their apparel ("Dude, can I borrow your LA Guns shirt?"), Crime in Stereo forge ahead with the kind of hardcore that made bands like Gorilla Biscuits, Dag Nasty and Kid Dynamite a permanent fixture in our collective conscience. Hardcore the way it was meant to be played. Bassist Mike Musilli talks about where the band is going, and how they plan to get there.

**I was reading some old interviews and it seemed like you were pretty happy with Blackout. What were the problems there?**
Towards the end of our relationship with Blackout things went really bad. We were 100 percent lied to about certain things by Bill [Wilson] over at Blackout. It's no secret, he knows the way we feel and we know how he feels, and we're cool with him on a business basis but he definitely crossed some lines he shouldn't have and things didn't work out as well as they could have.

**Were you a bit hesitant signing to a new record label with the experience you had? Was it hard to take that leap of faith?**
No, it actually made it a lot easier because Nitro were pretty up front about how things were and they made sure we knew exactly what we were getting into, which is exactly what Blackout didn't do. It actually made the whole transition a lot smoother. We're psyched on it. So far things have been cool.

**Hardcore has always been protective about bands getting too big.**
I think it's a good and a bad thing. There's two sides to that because there's bands like Hatebreed and Sick of It All, bands that don't change their sound but just happen to get big enough that they could be on a major and it's not a big deal. They never changed their sound, or their look, or their ideals as a band, they just happened to warrant a large enough audience. But there's these other bands that just turn around and look for these upstream deals to major labels and have preconceived notions of it. So it goes both ways.

**You write a lot of songs about growing up and the things you went through.**
We write what we know about, living in the suburbs. It only gets weird when you get these bands from suburbia that talk about crews and fuckin' things like that. You should write about your own experiences. If you write like that, it makes it easier for everyone to understand. Anyone can relate to it because you're not lying or putting on a front.

**I have noticed a lot of hardcore bands these days are pretending to be urban gangsters.**
Yeah, it's stupid. There's no reason to act tough because you're in a band that's heavy. The real bands that actually live what they say, you never see them putting on a front. You are who you are, there's no reason to be something different.

**Hardcore can be really insular. Sometimes it doesn't really project outwards to what's going on in other parts of the world. It's like a vacuum almost. Do you agree?**
Yes and no. Politics will always be a part of hardcore, but a lot of times the way bands go about presenting their politics is really obtuse and it's screaming against something but there's no real focus to it. Sometimes you get bands that really attack certain issues and that's always cool to see, but I do agree that you lose something when the politics become so general. They're screaming about something, but what actually is it?

**So what else is pissing you off?**
College loans are getting to me. Being in a band and not having health insurance is really shitty. There's no reason why people should have to pay for their own health.

**Does Long Island still have a positive scene?**
We could never complain about Long Island. It's a great scene. There's a lot of great kids and great bands. Long Island is awesome.

www.crimeinstereo.com

2005 "The Contract" EP (Blackout)
2004 "Explosives and the Will to Use Them" (Blackout)

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# Bloodlined Calligraphy

**by Cosmo Lee**

It must be revenge for being fed to the lions. Christians are making some of the heaviest, most brutal music today. Hardcore punk label Facedown Records is largely responsible. Four Facedown bands are even playing Hellfest this year. How times have changed.

Bloodlined Calligraphy is one of the latest additions to the Facedown roster, and the band's new album, "They Want You Silent" kicks like a mule on steroids. Singer Ally French is the band's not-so-secret weapon. The only other female singers whose voice comes close in brutality are Arch Enemy's Angela Gossow and Walls of Jericho's Candace Kucsulain, the latter contributes guest vocals on the album.

Stylistically, Bloodlined Calligraphy plays straight-up metallic hardcore with thrashy riffs and huge breakdowns. "Saturday Night in Dixie" is the album's highlight with its neck-snapping breakdown leading to a surprisingly swinging groove worthy of Premonitions of War. Touches of Swedish metal in places help keep things interesting, and at a compact 28 minutes, the album is a tight nugget of hardcore.

Modern Fix caught up with the band on tour and drummer Carter answered a few questions.

**Your website says your van "blew up" in Las Vegas - how much of an explosion are we talking about?**
(laughs) It wasn't really an explosion. It was more like a pop followed by lots of smoke and bubbling and profuse amounts of every fluid found under a cars hood. It's cool though because we got to get a new van out of it, but we were stuck in Vegas way too long and had to cancel some shows.

**Some of your tour venues include churches. Are they taken aback by the ruckus you bring?**
Yeah, sometimes they are. Most are totally cool with what we do. But you run into certain ones that try and tell you basically that you aren't Christian enough. But the good ones by far outweigh the bad ones.

**The band is getting major magazine write-ups and selling out of merch. Has your lifestyle changed any?**
Yes and no. Yes, because all our parents, friends and kids see us in magazines so they tend to think we are a lot bigger than we are. More kids are coming to shows and every show we get loads of kids that say they came because they saw us in a magazine. We get asked for autographs and hugs and pictures a lot more than we ever have in the past. The no part of the answer is there are still nights when we sleep at truckstops in our van. But things are definitely getting better each tour. So hopefully by our next tour, our answer will just be, 'yes'.

**Bane singer Aaron Bedard recently told a crowd, "If you expect a hardcore band to play a 15-song set, you're crazy." Is he wise or a wimp?**
He's a very very wise man. (laughs) With our band we always say, "Let's go off for 8 songs, instead of going 50% for 12".

www.blcmosh.com

2005 "They Want You Silent" (Facedown)
2004 "The Beginning of the End" (Strike First)
2002 "Say Hi to the Bad Guy" (Selah)

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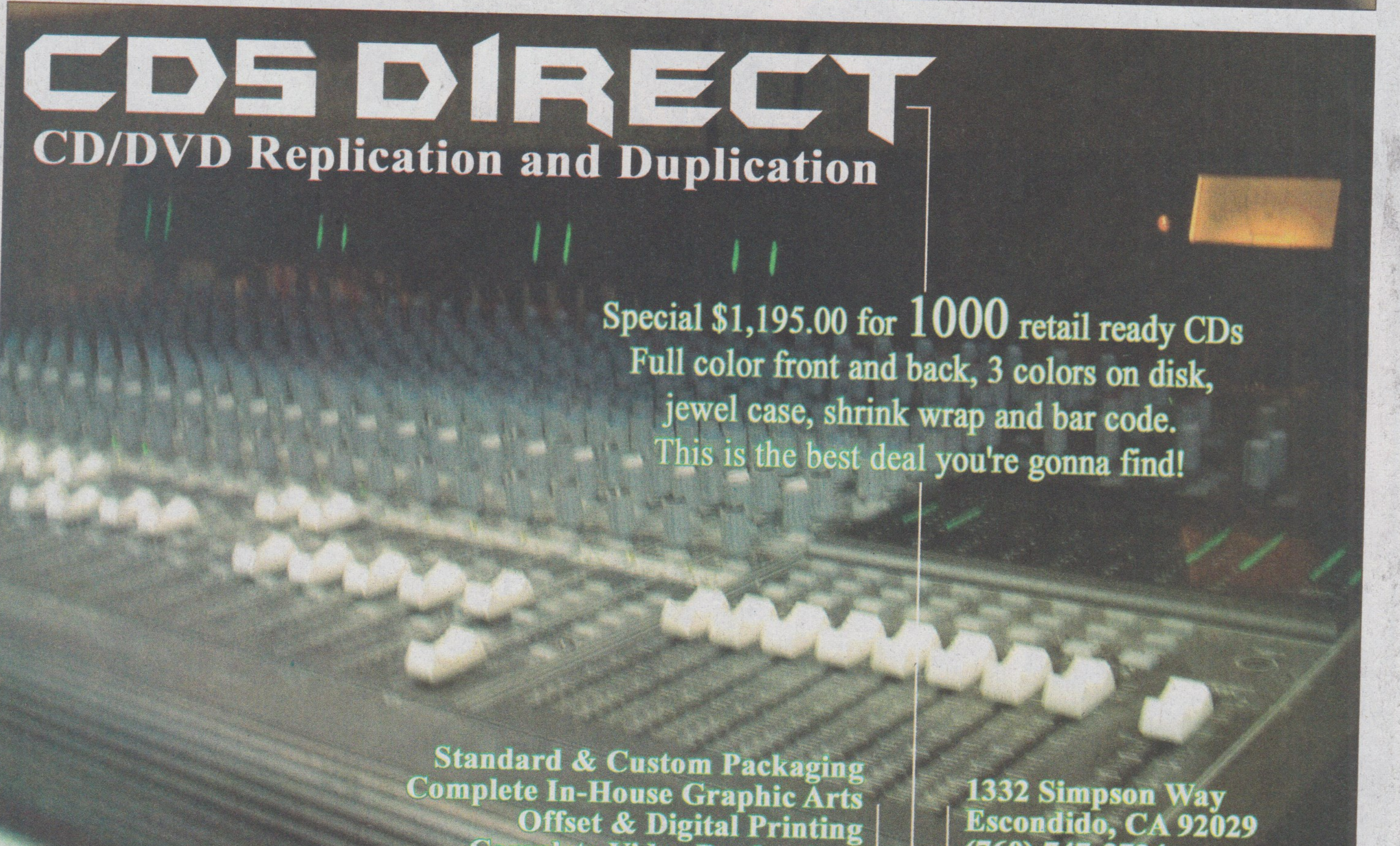
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# STARS

## Emotional directness and owning up to your shit

by Dailyn Brown

"Set Yourself On Fire," the amazingly kick ass new album from Stars, proves that locking your band in cabin for one of the coldest winters on record ends up creating beauty and not despair. The album flows from one song to the next almost like the telling of a story, mostly about love. Amy's beautiful voice, also heard in Broken Social Scene, in partnership with Torque's strong musical presence, makes a very believable romance. In "sunny" San Diego when the Stars arrived for sound check, it was pouring rain. The sounds of a Pac Man machine rang in the background as Torque, one of the founding members of Stars, sat down to chat about Canada, the power of lyrics and being on fire.

**What is people's reaction to the music in Canada opposed to in America?**
It's changed a lot now in Canada, there are so many good bands at the moment. The kids are so excited to have it be theirs. Shows tend to be very crazy, like you're a rock star. But in America we have built up an audience over five years and the shows are great but they tend to be people who have been into the band longer. In Canada, I think our audience definitely skews younger to, but I think that is because they can get into bars younger.

**When you moved to NYC, were you moving there specifically to start a band and make music?**
No, we wanted to start a band but I was going to theater school and James and Chris were going to music school. We were so naïve and so outside the music game. We didn't know anybody in rock and roll and certainly had never played any gigs. It was all very disconnected from anything real. It was just an excuse to hang out together and get stoned and play music. This has all come as a complete shock that anyone is interested at all.

**When you sing you sort of pick up a British accent.**
I was born in England and I moved to Canada when I was eight years old. I guess I never quite lost the accent. I also feel you kind of end up sounding like the things you are influenced by. The way that pop music sounds has always sounded good to me, when there are lots of vowels in it, lots of space in the sound. I'm an anglophile at heart. When anyone sings I think they invent a bit of a character for themselves. That is what I think is so interesting and so crucial about singing. It puts you in touch with that more pure side of yourself. In my singing I try and capture a sense of softness that I find beautiful in the world. But then whenever I hear it, it irritates the shit out of me.

**What would make you want to set yourself on fire?**
Nothing would make me set myself on fire, the title was a metaphor for the bands ability to ignite themselves before someone else. We tend to be very direct and honest. Emotional directness and owning up to your shit is something that is very powerful. If you reveal your weakness, if you reveal your frailty, there is an incredible power in that. If everyone were to do that we would be the majority because the majority of people would be killed before they kill and would die for the people they love. I think that part of humanity is very powerful and hasn't been tapped enough.

**There is a deep emotional quality to the music. How much personally do the songs relate to you?**
I'm an actor. I learned early on in my life to perform even when I'm not feeling it. My fear of being boring and my desperation to make contact with people is so great I always tend to overcome any lack of interest or lack of connection to the material. I am much more interested in trying to figure out how to put the lyrics in a context that everyone can relate to rather than feeling I'm allowing people into my diary or being confessional, not that that isn't a great way to write songs, it's just not my way. I would rather examine other people's feelings. The lyrics are very important to us because they make songs last for people. People keep coming back to songs because of the lyrics, because of the phrases that they connect to. They make songs more timeless.

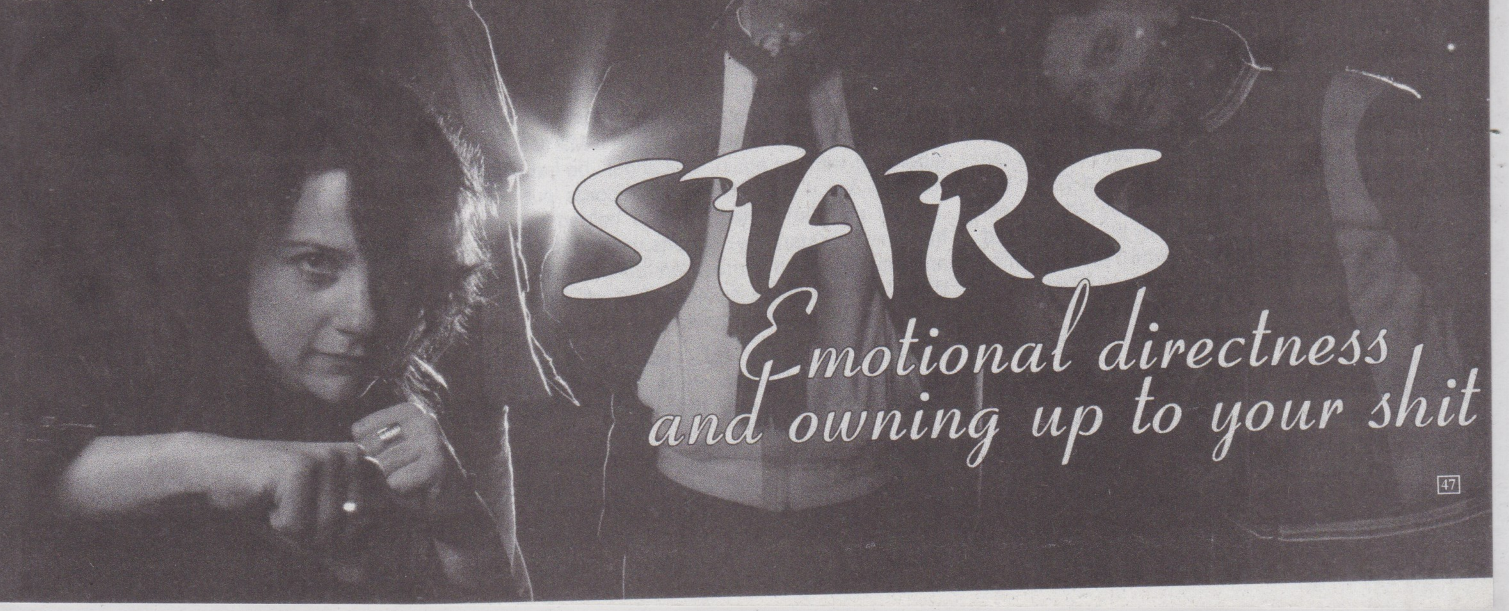
## In my singing I try and capture a sense of softness that I find beautiful in the world. But then whenever I hear it, it irritates the shit out of me.

**Did you work during the recording of the new album?**
We had the support of an advance for the first time in our lives so we didn't have to work during the recording. This was hugely important. I think it allowed us to make a different kind of record than we had made before. It was our main focus. It got a lot more juice in it and a lot more specificity. Everyone was in the same space, same place and same time. You can get a lot more power coming out of that.

**Is there anything you miss about the States now that you are back in Canada?**
The people. There are always these extraordinarily eccentric wonderful people in America. Just when you think you know what America is, you meet someone who gives you another perspective on what the country is and what their experience is and that sense of possibility is beautiful in America. You can't find kooks anywhere in the world like you can find them in America, in the best sense of the word and the worst. It's a strange dichotomy.

www.arts-crafts.ca

2005 "Set Yourself On Fire" (Arts & Crafts)
2003 "Heart" (Paper Bag)
2001 "Nightsongs" (Le Grand Magistery)



# Howard Hello

**by Gordon Downs**

Kenseth Thibideau is an individual that wears many hats. Audio engineer, bassist, keyboardist and he'd probably make a good power forward as well, due to his staggering height and ability to "box out" down in the paint. He's currently involved with several well-to-do bands, most notably Pinback, followed closely by the unstoppable prog/math/metal quintet Sleeping People. Now he's also assisting Mr. Rob Crowe in yet another band, aptly titled: Goblin Cock. But it's his recordings under the moniker of Howard Hello is where a much more sensitive side of Thibideau can be found. A far cry from the metallic crunch of Sleeping People, and definitely less pop laden than anything else he's currently involved with. On Howard Hello's third release, simply entitled "EP" Kenseth delves into "psychedelic avant-pop" with great results. With a little help from his friends Shizuka Hyashi, Chelsea Rose and his fellow cohort in Sleeping People guitarist Amber Coffman, Thibideau managed to create a four song album which ended up becoming, "EP". Also lending his skills to the Howard Hello roster this time around is the ever amazing percussionist Zach Hill. Although noticeably absent from this recording is Howard Hello co-founder and point guard Marty Anderson, from the excellent San Francisco group Dilute.

Modern Fix managed to get a hold of Kenseth for a few minutes to ask him a few questions about the new HH release, and see just what's craplin' in the world of Thibideau?

**It's been two years since you released your previous Howard Hello album, "Don't Drink His Blood". Between the studio work you do at Singing Serpent and working with Pinback and Sleeping People, how'd you find the time to record these tracks?**

I have only been doing freelance work for Singing Serpent for the past year due to the erratic and extensive touring schedule I've had since last fall and this spring. I would be home a month or two at a time and would just work on Howard Hello in my bedroom whenever I felt inspired, or couldn't sleep. I think getting some sort of deadline from Jeremy Devine, (Temporary Residence) helped motivate me to spend extra hours on finishing the EP for him. Actually, I spend many hours on the road with Pinback mixing the Howard Hello EP and the Sleeping People LP on my laptop in the tour van or hotel rooms. That saved me many, many hours on both projects.

**This is the first Howard Hello record without the contributions of Marty Anderson. Was the decision to continue sans Marty a tough one to make, or did it feel copasetic to record this "EP" with just you at the helm?**

Marty has collaborated with me in the past with mixing and arranging Howard Hello stuff, but usually I do most of the instrumental writing and recording and he writes vocal parts and/or other magic to what I send him (at least that's what we did for the 2nd record). But this time, he was really busy with putting out his solo record called "Okay" (which I highly recommend for anyone,) so I just finished it myself with the vocal help of Amber Coffman (Sleeping People) and Chelsea Rose.

**You have some damn fine musicians on "EP" - most notably Zach Hill. How'd you meet Zach, and can we expect more collaborations between the two of you in the future?**

Zach Hill is an old school acquaintance turned friend through music and much talk. He is a fan of Howard Hello stuff and gave me a CD in the mail with several drumbeats to use and molest anyway I wanted for the next HH thing. I thanked him very much for his free spirited (but extremely strong) approach to music and art. That guy is inspiring for everyone. I definitely would love to collaborate with him more in the future. Please.

**Will Howard Hello ever play a live show, or does a live performance require Marty?**

This is a toughie. We have played live. I played a live Howard Hello set with Marty in San Francisco at the Bottom of the Hill last March. It was fun and worked out very nicely for being really rushed and last minute. We played with "Okay" so we all shared equipment and band members. I really want to turn Howard Hello into a live band, but I need to make time for myself and others to do so. But its being worked out and I'm going to write the next record while keeping in mind a live set. It should be more natural than past shows. Howard Hello live feels very green and incomplete to me. I will work hard on making a live set with friends in hopes to have lots of fun and put on a good show.

**Has any Howard Hello material ever ended up being used by Sleeping People or Pinback?**

I would say pretty confidently, no. I think the Howard Hello stuff is a really separate thing for me. I consider it very experimental for me and I try to do things artistically and musically that I have never done, nor would do in any other artistic outlet. For the record, I have no creative input in the Pinback records, that's all Rob and Zach.

**All of your HH albums have been released via Temporary Residence. How important is it for you to have your Howard Hello recordings released exclusively through Temporary Residence LTD?**

Oh, it's not exclusive. In fact "as we speak" I am recording another new EP for Sickroom Records, (Mitch from Rumah Sakit's label). And Marty is collaborating with me again, so it should be fun. But I have to say, I will always put records out with Jeremy and Temp Res. He has helped me out from the very start. He supports me and my music and my concepts more than anyone I've met. We're great buddies, so naturally I will work with him for as long as he wants.

**Any albums, new or old - (aside from Howard Hello, Sleeping People, Pinback, Goblin Cock, Bunky & 31 Knots etc.) that you could recommend to our readers?**

Oh man, I just got done with Goblin Cock practice. That stuff is really growing on me (pun intended). And an appropriate mention would be a new record coming out called, "The Ladies". It's Rob Crow and Zach Hill, that's it! Jeremy Devine from Temp Res is putting it out. It's sooooo good.

**What's happening with Rumah Sakit?**

We did a (reunion?) tour in April and it was fun, but I don't think we will do it again. At least not without reforming and writing new material, which has been talked about, but it's not for sure. I'm always up for whatever is possible and reasonable. I love that band too.

**What do you have planned for fall 2005, any touring?**

Sleeping People, Sleeping People and more Sleeping People. Finishing new Howard Hello EP on Sickroom Records and then start writing the new Howard Hello LP which will be for next year on Temp Res. Start working full time at Singing Serpent's new studio.

**Would you please consider doing a cover of Suzanne Vega & DNA's song "Tom's Diner" on the next Howard Hello album? You should think about it.**

I don't know the song, and I don't really do cover's but if I think it's appropriate, maybe I'll rip it off.

**And finally, does Howard Hello have a message for the children?**

Don't take anything personally, don't make assumptions, always be true with your word, always do your best. From "The Four Agreements" by Don Miguel Ruiz.

www.temporaryresidence.com

2005 "EP" (Temporary Residence LTD.)
2003 "Don't Drink His Blood" (Temporary Residence LTD.)
2002 "Howard Hello" (Temporary Residence LTD.)

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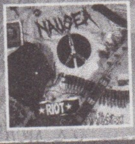

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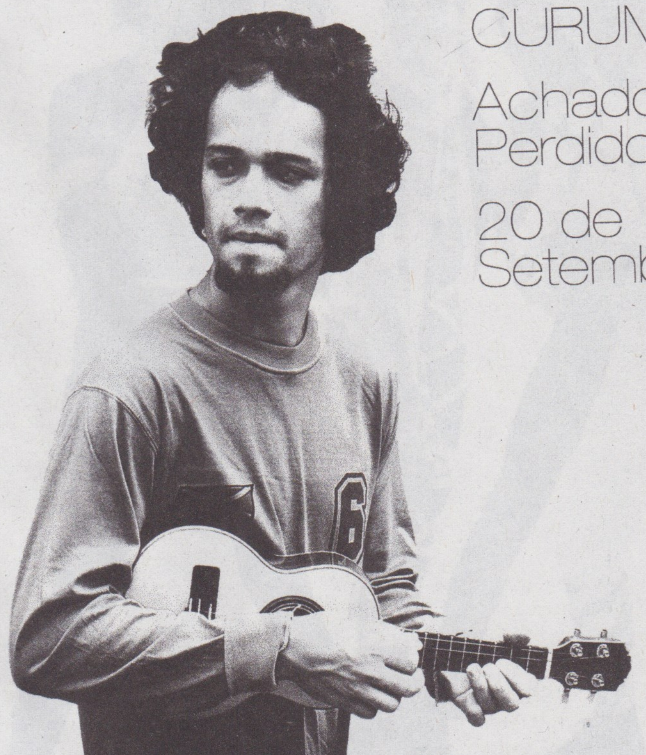

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# EPOXIES

## a big 'fuck you' to expectations.

**by Chad Bowar**

There's one thing Fritz M. Static wants to make clear: The Epoxies are NOT an eighties band, even though their music is influenced by new wave and he plays a synthesizer. The Portland, Oregon based band's sophomore effort, "Stop The Future" incorporates punk ethos with pop sensibility. The album is on Fat Wreck Chords, a label known more for different styles of music than the Epoxies. Static was a bit concerned about what the fan response would be, but everything turned out fine. "It wasn't as bad as I expected." he says. "I was definitely braced for the worst. Fat Wreck Chords is such a different label aesthetically than Dirtnap, where we released our first record. A lot of my friends despise that label and everything that ever came out on it. They just pigeonhole it for being just Southern California, baseball hats, baggy shorts. But they've been releasing some really diverse stuff."

One of the trademarks of the Epoxies is their wild stage costumes. Their futuristic outfits are all homemade, and I asked Static if it gets harder to keep coming up with newer and better costumes. "Oh yeah." he replies. "But you've got to own that. Sometimes you get jealous of how easy it is for other bands. They're just wearing their street clothes. But actually most indie bands spend more time on their outfits than we do. Ours are just stupider. It's part of the act. It's part of the fun for us."

"Stop The Future" was produced by Martin Feveyear, who has also worked with groups like Mudhoney, Screaming Trees and Presidents of the USA. How did they hook up with Feveyear? "He came up to us at a show in Seattle and said he'd like to produce us and to come to his studio." explains Static. "We had a day off, so we did. We listened to some stuff and realized he had done a lot of records that we really liked. We let it lie for about 6 months. Then we were going to do a 7 inch and decided to try him out on that. That came out just dynamite. We were really happy with that. We went down to San Francisco to work on this record, to brainstorm on it. We did that and decided we were super comfortable with Martin and wanted to do an album with him."

In addition to some very catchy original material, "Stop The Future" includes a cover song. They decided to remake the Scorpions song "Robot Man". It seems like an unusual choice, but it made sense to Static. "It was one that I had in my mind to cover the whole time. We've released three cover songs in the past, and they've always been b-sides. We intended to make it a b-side also, but it somehow fit the project and we decided to go for it. I'm glad we did, because it's got a lot of attention. People are really shocked by it. In a way, it's a big 'fuck you' to expectations."

The Epoxies participated in last year's compilation album "Rock Against Bush". Was it because of their political views, or just to get some added exposure? Static defends the decision. "I can't deny that it did things for us, and going into it we realized that would be the case." he admits. "But it was absolutely not a mercenary decision. It was something that we really believed in. We're a political band. We're not really directly political, but if you listen to what we're singing about, it's more sociological. We're interested in greater trends, technology and society and the way people think and how they're influenced by things like the media. That stuff is really on my mind a lot."

In addition to Static, who provides vocals along with synthesizers, the Epoxies lineup includes vocalist Roxy Epoxy, guitarist Viz Spectrum, drummer Ray Cathode and bassist Shock Diode. The way the band sounds today is nothing like Static had planned when they formed back in 2000. "The concept originally was a robot garage rock band." he reveals. "A lot of the secret influences of this band are '60s garage stuff and Motown, which doesn't come out in the tones, but it's in the song writing a little bit. We're big fans of the really nutty, proto-punk '60s groups. What we ended up with, to our surprise, was nothing like that. I'm happy with where it went."

When the Epoxies were in their infancy, synthesizers were definitely on the outs. But the tide has turned and it looks like they were visionaries. Static agrees. "I know in some cases we've actually inspired bands to start playing stuff like that. More of the truth is that we had great timing. For whatever reason, we recognized a sound that people were ready for."

www.theepoxies.com

2005 "Stop The Future" (Fat Wreck Chords)
2002 "The Epoxies" (Dirtnap)

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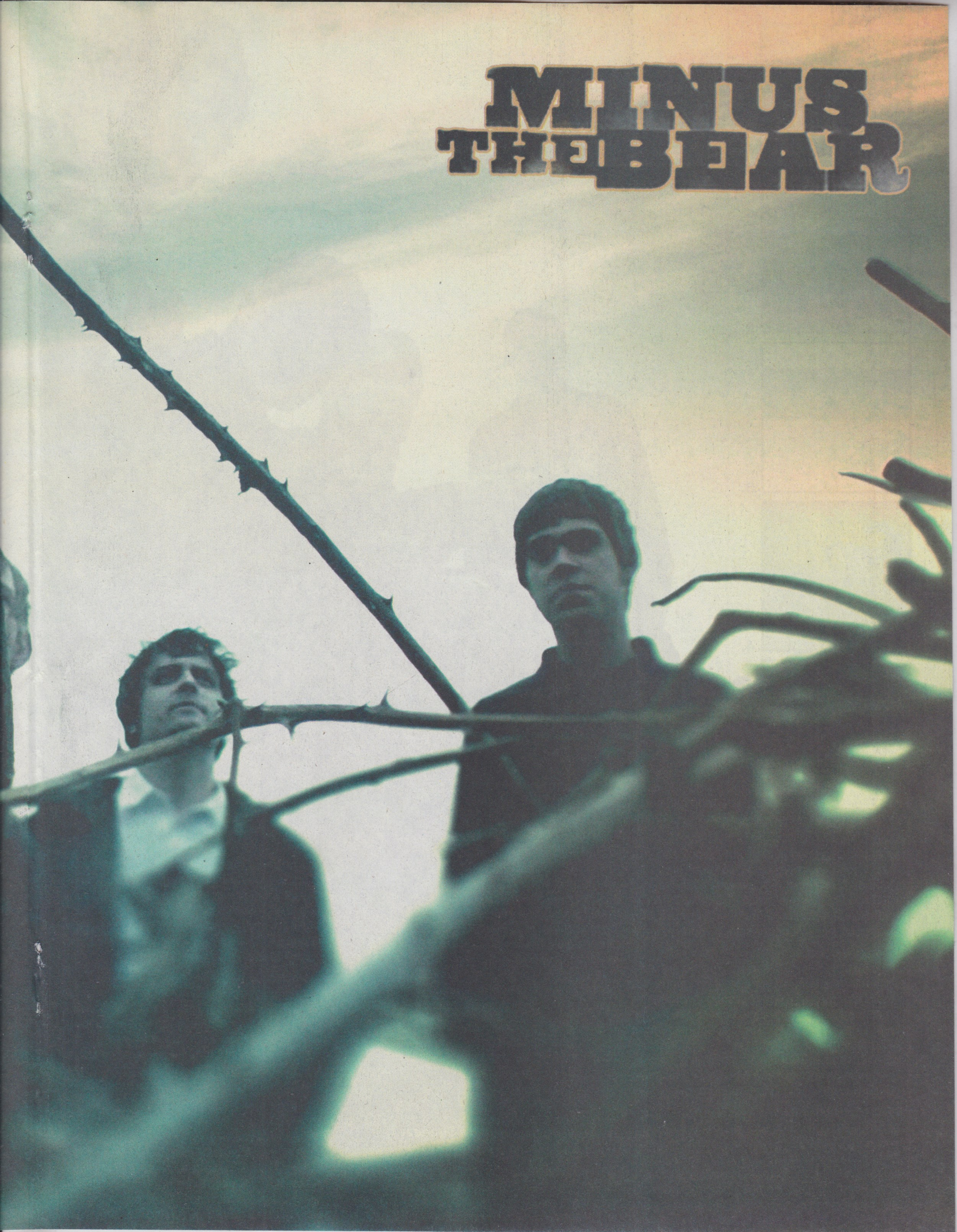
MINUS
THE BEAR

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2.

3.

4.

5.

1. 2005 “Menos El Oso” (Suicide Squeeze)
2. 2004 “They Make Beer Commercials Like This” (Arena Rock)
3. 2003 “Highly Refined Pirates” (Suicide Squeeze)
4. 2003 “Bands Like It When You Yell “YAR!” At Them” (Suicide Squeeze)
5. 2001 “This Is What I Know About Being Gigantic” (Suicide Squeeze)

# MINUS THE BEAR Shelf Life & Mischa Barton

**by Gordon Downs**

"I'm not young, I'm old." Deadpans Jake Snider, lead singer and guitarist for Seattle's Minus The Bear, undoubtedly the most unique quintet to emerge from the Pacific Northwest. "I've been doing [music] for over ten years." he adds, "I'm starting to feel the affects of rock music and loud noises. When it's quiet and there's no other sounds around it's really apparent that there's just a constant ringing in my ears. I've got an appointment later on today to get some fitted earplugs. If I could've gotten these earplugs years ago I would've. We'll see if I end up using them."

At twenty nine, Snider speaks like a veteran of several wars. The only Seattle native in Minus The Bear, Snider's been involved within the music scene since Seattle's heyday in the early nineties. Before joining forces with the other four members of Minus The Bear, Snider was playing in a band called Sharks Keep Moving, as the rest of the guys were also involved in their other bands as well. It was through the camaraderie of Seattle's bustling music scene at the time that provided a perfect venue for all five members of the band to come together in a kismet fashion. "Everybody in the band knew each other from playing music locally," adds Snider. "I recorded bands in my basement. Once everybody moved to Seattle and their bands started to disintegrate, we all just kind of got together."

Erin Tate, drummer for Minus The Bear concurs, "We actually started playing together while we were still all in our other bands. Then as those bands broke up, we just kind of took this band more seriously." Tate, who plays drums in several other bands moved to Seattle from Minneapolis in the mid-nineties and is actually the key person regarding MTB's long lasting relationship with one of Americas' finest independent record labels (also based out of Seattle) Suicide Squeeze Records. "I worked at a Mail Boxes Etc. and [Dave Dickenson, owner of Suicide Squeeze] had a mailbox there." Tate explains, "That's how I met him. I was always really impressed with his label and thought it was really cool. Right when we started being a band, I kind of begged him to [sign us] and he agreed to put out a seven inch for us, and that was kind of all he would do. So we recorded two songs for the seven inch and he heard it and was just like, 'Can you guys go in and just record the rest of the album?' That's how our first EP came about."

Since signing with Suicide Squeeze, Minus The Bear has released two EP's, 1999's "This Is What I Know About Being Gigantic," 2002's "Bands Like It When You Yell "YAR!" At Them" as well as two full length albums, the first of which became an instant classic, 2002's "Highly Refined Pirates." This past August, Minus The Bear released their second full length on Suicide Squeeze entitled, "Menos El Oso." (MTB also released an EP via the Arena Rock Recording Co, "They Make Beer Commercials Like This" in 2004)

For fans familiar with MTB's previous recordings, "Menos El Oso" is the follow up they've been waiting for. Frenetic beats with sonic-rock guitars layered over a smattering of keyboards that provide the perfect backdrop for Snider's unique voice and thematic lyrics. At times his words can be as blunt as a brick to your face, though he also possess the ability to be as cryptic as Stephen Malkmus or motherfucking Don King.

Though despite his often profound and clever lyrics, it's the music that comes first in the world of Minus The Bear. "Basically we'll just demo the songs, and I'll take the demos home and write lyrics for the demos." Snider explains of his song writing process. "Sitting in a room alone, I find it easier to write because you've got the structure of the song there and you know how much space you need to come up with to fill the song out."

Originally, Minus The Bear had started out as a four piece with bassist Dave Knudson, drummer Erin Tate, guitarist Cory Murchy and Matt Bayles (pronounced Bay-Less) on keyboards. "For a minute Dave and I were thinking of singing, and thank God we decided not to do that!" Explains guitarist Cory Murchy. "That would have been miserable. Jake was a mutual friend of all of ours so it seemed like a perfect match." Snider more than whole heartedly agrees to this fact. "I was the last addition to the band." He ruminates. "They were thinking they would have Dave or Cory try to sing, but it just seemed ridiculous to me."

Snider took to the helm as the singer songwriter of Minus The Bear, and quickly learned that being clever can often be an annoying double edged sword. With previous song titles like, "Women We Haven't Met Yet", "Hey! Is that A Ninja Up There?" and my personal favorite, "I Lost All My Money At The Cock Fights", Minus The Bear soon came to be known in certain circles as "That band with crazy ass-song titles!" Since the inception of the band, the song titles have always had nothing to do with the actual song itself. They were red herrings created solely for the amusement of the band and their friends. "The title thing is totally independent of the song itself obviously." Explains Snider, MTB's sole songwriter. "Yeah, we all name the songs." Adds Murchy. "Its all stuff we've talked about; stupid inside jokes." Snider agrees, "We're kind of over the whole deal. We thought it was funny, and then it just turned into what every journalist talked about, instead of talking about music. We ended up getting a lot of press about song titles which is just somewhat of a waste." Murchy adds, "We're actually tired about being asked about it in interviews."

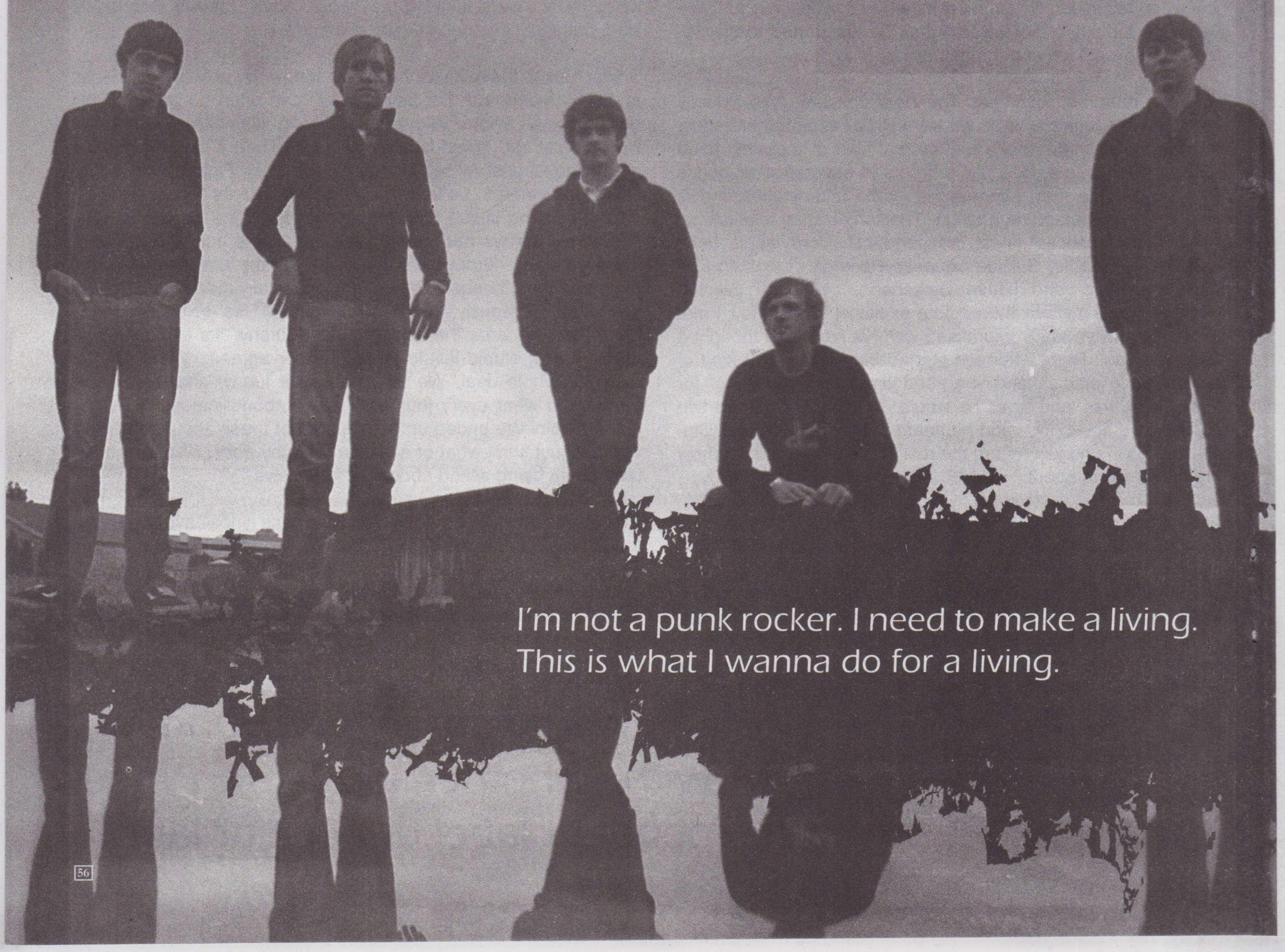
It's obvious on, "Menos El Oso" that Snider's lyrics have evolved to a certain extent, and the song titles have been tamed quite a bit. Inspired by a tour of Spain Minus The Bear did last year, "Menos El Oso" is eleven songs brimming with qualities that scream for mainstream placement. Sonic, angular and often soaring guitar riffs,

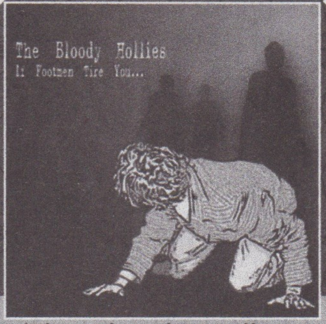
**You have the opportunity to get screwed with anyone you work with, whether they're an independent label or a major label.**

ethereal keyboards, kinetic drumbeats and heartfelt lyrics have become a hot commodity these days thanks to indie crossovers like Death Cab For Cutie and Modest Mouse (*both bands hailing from the Pacific Northwest).

With the commercial viability that "Menos El Oso" contains, it would seem that now would the prime opportunity for major labels to come knocking, or at least a guest spot on The OC or something? While Minus The Bear may appear to be a staunchly independent band at its core, the thought of playing that fucking bait shop doesn't sound like such a bad idea to them. "Absolutely," says Snider, "I don't see why not? These people are looking for music that they like for the TV shows and commercials or whatever. It's a service you can provide for these people. There are more revenue streams available then just potentially getting royalties on a record that you made and touring. There's other ways for money to come in and there's nothing wrong with that." Murchy also agrees with that point of view, "Yeah sure, why not? If it's gonna help the band out then I don't see why not. I wouldn't say no to it, just on the premise that it was The O.C. or MTV. It's another medium to get your music across I guess. Albeit a weird one. But we've seen other bands do really well. I'm not gonna sweat it and hope and pray that it happens, but if it happens then cool." Minus The Bear keyboardist and producer extraordinaire, Matt Bayles concurs with his band mates. "I don't think that any of us are so stupid as to think that we would turn that down. We come from an independent music scene and all that; I mean we've put a lot of time and effort into this and we've never really considered this a hobby. If we can get to the point of making enough money off the band and not have to come home and work, then yeah we're going to take that opportunity, assuming that we're not selling our soul." He adds with a laugh. "Signing to a major label in some cases requires selling your soul to be a part of it."

In some cases when an indie band does end up signing with a major label, some of their devoutly religious fans feel as if the band has sold out for the entrapments of money and fame, and have betrayed their DIY/Indie/Punk aesthetic. "It's like does all of a sudden the music turn bad? Does the sound suck all of a sudden?" Murchy ponders. "I have no idea and I don't understand that train of thought. If we can do this and make some money and continue doing it so we can concentrate on making music, then who's to say that's a bad idea, like we're selling out? We're just making it work." Snider's sentiments perhaps sum up the prospect of singing to a major label best. "I've never been too opposed to that whole thing." Snider explains. "It would have to be a really unbelievable deal. It depends on the whole thing, if it makes sense and we still got to make the music that we want to make then that's cool and we'll look into it. You have the opportunity to get screwed with anyone you work with whether they're an independent label or a major label. It's terrifying. If you try to keep it real and for some reason think that there's something wrong with making money off the thing you love to do, then what do you end up doing? You end up working for horrible corporations. That seems more like selling out than wanting to make money off of something you love to do. I'm twenty nine years old. I'm not a punk rocker. I need to make a living. This is what I



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wanna do for a living." "The major label thing is a slippery slope," adds Bayles. "It all has to come down to if you feel like the people who're trying to sign you support you. It's not just the A&R guy at the label who has to like you, it's like you have to have the rest of the people who work at the company believing in you as well. It's really hard to know if that's really true. We haven't had any big meetings with major labels or anything like that. Though if we ever did, I'd want to meet more than just the A&R guy, I'd want to meet the marketing people and see if they all liked us as well. Because if they don't like the band then they're not going to promote that band hard. I'm in the music business as a producer, so I have a keen understanding of what the hell happens, because I've seen it happen with many a band."

Not to worry though gang, Minus The Bear are quite happy recording records and having them released via Suicide Squeeze, mainly due to the labels hands-on owner David Dickenson. "Dave is just super easy to work with," explains Snider. "He totally believes in the band and he pays us royalties. You can't beat that."

Minus The Bear will be touring in support of "Menos El Oso" traversing the country in the fall of 2005, with tentative tour plans for Europe and America again in 2006. While "Menos El Oso" is only the bands' second full length, it definitely stands out amongst the rest of the "indie" pack as a versatile album in an era where platinum records are awarded to crap-shit emo bands that are nothing more than MTV inspired clones; manicured whores whose shelf life is dependent on if their girlfriends keep breaking up with them, allowing them to write heartfelt songs about loss and love, because it's real. It's all so fucking real. While Snider's lyrics may give the listener a certain sense of discontent or dissonance, he's quite comfortable with where Minus The Bear are finding themselves in 2005. "I'm in a band with all my friends and we get to play music. I like what's going on right now." And there ain't no shelf life on that baby!

www.suicidesqueeze.net
www.minusthebear.com

2005 "Menos El Oso" (Suicide Squeeze)
2004 "They Make Beer Commercials Like This" (Arena Rock)
2003 "Highly Refined Pirates" (Suicide Squeeze)
2003 "Bands Like It When You Yell "YAR!" At Them" (Suicide Squeeze)
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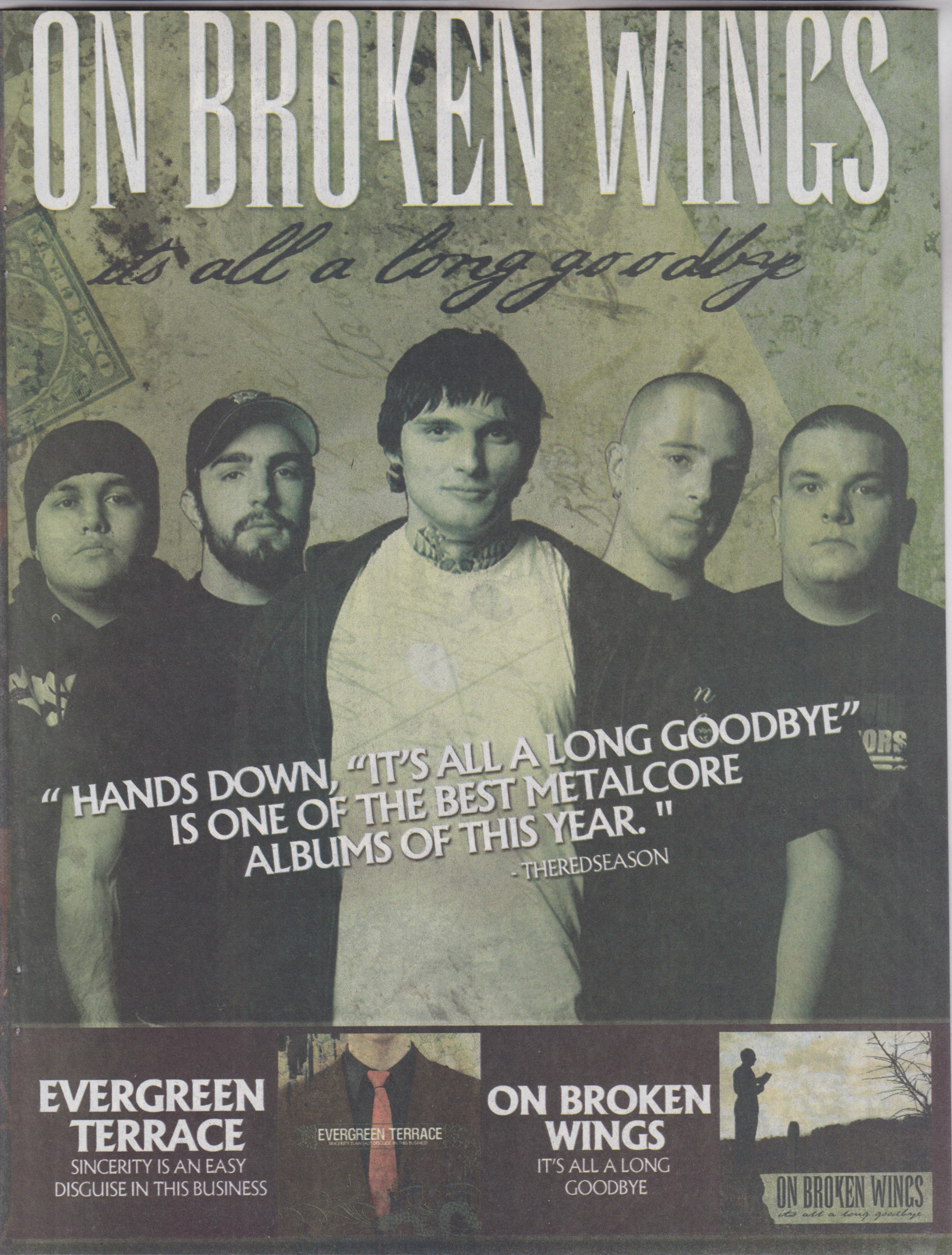
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# Go Betty Go

**by Chad Bowar**

If the crowd response at Warped 2005 is any indication, Go Betty Go has a bright future. The all-female pop-punk quintet from L.A. has an EP under their belts and have just released their first full-length, "Nothing Is More". The album was produced by Flogging Molly's Ted Hutt and features a guest appearance on accordion from the Pogues' James Fearnley. Backstage at the Warped show in Charlotte, North Carolina I had the chance to talk to guitarist Betty Cisneros, bassist Michelle Rangel and drummer Aixa Vilar, whose sister Nicolette is the band's singer.

**Has there been anyone on the Warped tour that you got to meet that you admire?**

*Aixa:* For me it's been Rancid. It just happened today. After we played our set today, Lars from Rancid came up. He's not playing, he's just hanging out with The Transplants. He watched our set and really liked it. He came up to Betty and me and complimented us on our playing and our song writing. He had our CD. They're a band I've really looked up to and now that he actually approached us and watched our set, makes it completely different. Instead of us being fans, it was like musicians talking. It was pretty cool.

**How has the band's sound evolved since you started?**

*Aixa:* We've definitely gotten tighter as a band, and that comes from playing so much and recording. You learn a lot in the studio and playing live. Since day one we've also developed a lot in our song writing. When we listen back to some of the songs we wrote when we started compared to the songs on this new record, we definitely have grown.

*Betty:* The new music is more of the four of us. In the beginning it was mostly Aixa and I. We grew in that sense where we learned to write together as a group.

*Aixa:* It was like a collaboration between the four of us. We all came together in the rehearsal space. We were there for three months and everyone was putting in new ideas. We went a little crazy and toward the end, we wanted to get the hell out of there, but we did get some work done, which was good.

***They sell more video games than records these days. To get your song in something like that is great exposure.***

**How were you able to get your music into video games and a Ban deodorant commercial?**

*Aixa:* A lot of the people working in the video game industry are fans of music and younger people. They're not 40 or 50 year old men working at a label that have nothing to do with music. They're actually true fans. Since those people are involved in the scene and are going to shows and friends are giving them CDs, they know new stuff that's starting out. They're fans of the music. It just so happened that someone at the company that put out the Burnout game were fans of our band and they contacted us. On that whole game, it's almost all Warped tour bands. Same thing with the Fantastic Four video game. It's such a great opportunity because you get so much exposure from video games because it's growing so much. They sell more video games than records these days. To get your song in something like that is great exposure. So many new fans have come from that. They tell us they heard the song, looked us up and bought the record. Instead of hearing us on the radio they hear us in their video game.

**How did the affiliation with PETA come about?**

*Aixa:* We did an interview on the last Warped Tour and they just published it. Three of us in the band are vegetarians. Nicollette and I have been vegetarians all our lives because our parents were and we were raised that way. It's just normal to us. Michelle's been a vegetarian for a few years now.

**How is the dynamic in the band between you and your sister?**

*Aixa:* It's pretty good. There have been some fights, but most of them are because she gets annoyed about messes. She gets a little carried away. It's just stupid nagging. We have a dog on tour and she gets mad because sometimes he craps in the RV. It's just dumb fights like that, but nothing major.

**Do you guys agree with that?**

*Michelle:* Yeah. I always forget that they are sisters because they don't act like the typical sisters.

*Betty:* That's how our song "Come On" came about. Aixa wrote it about her sister.

www.gobettygo.com

2005 "Nothing Is More" (Side One Dummy)
2004 "Worst Enemy" (Side One Dummy)

by Jason Schreurs

After losing three of their five members and going through some intense line-up juggling, Montreal's A Perfect Murder are back with their second Victory Records release, "Strength Through Vengeance". Fueled by the intense vocals and lyrics of new screamer Kevin Randel, who the band recruited from Nashville, TN via an online ad, this album is a whirlwind of anger, perseverance and cuss-words. Yeah, what tough guy metalcore album would be complete without enough "fucks" to send a Sunday school teacher into conniption fits? But this is also some quality metalcore that will keep the kids endlessly wind-milling and ultimate fighting in the Thunderdome. Heck, they might even learn a thing or two about anger management while they're pounding the piss out of each other.

Modern Fix recently caught up with singer Randel and slung a few questions at him.

**Can you explain how you decided on the name of the album, Strength through Vengeance?**

People from my hometown of Nashville were counting me out after my band of five years [Skard] broke up, saying that I was done. People also counted A Perfect Murder out after the band fractured. We were all very angry at how we were being treated, so we channeled that into the title track of the album, "Strength Through Vengeance". It's about taking shit from no one, at any point or at any time in your life. Fuck everyone and everything that tries to bring you down. The people that try and bring you down are weak at heart, man. Those people are missing things from their life so they deem it necessary to try and create holes in other people's lives that are having happiness of any kind.

This is as much a concept album as anything. A common thread is woven throughout the body of this album, inner strength, believing in yourself, and trusting in your ideals that one can overcome and crush everything impeding your path. The song "Strength Through Vengeance" sets the tone for the entire CD. It starts with a message of strength through vengeance, which can be overcoming the odds in any case and not just physical retribution.

**Sounds pretty intense.**

It is important to have strong lyrical imagery in order to help the listener understand how strong one's will can be.

# A PERFECT MURDER

**What's "Deceit of Man" about?**

"Deceit of Man" is a song about the betrayal of one of my former bandmates that led to the demise of my last band and the following dissolution of our friendship after 17 years, and my determination to pursue a better musical situation to carry on and prove myself all over again.

**There's a lot of religious imagery on this album. Can you tell me a bit about your religious background?**

I have studied several topics and religions to help educate myself properly so I can make a conscious decision on my research, and not someone else's opinions or interpretations of something so important

**All of the songs on this album are written in first person but, as far as I can tell, they're not necessarily about you, or are they?**

Every song on this record is drawn from personal experiences in my life. There is nothing fake or contrived about my lyrics.

**"Rotten I" is a great song and is also quite clever in its wordplay. Can you tell me a little about the writing of that song?**

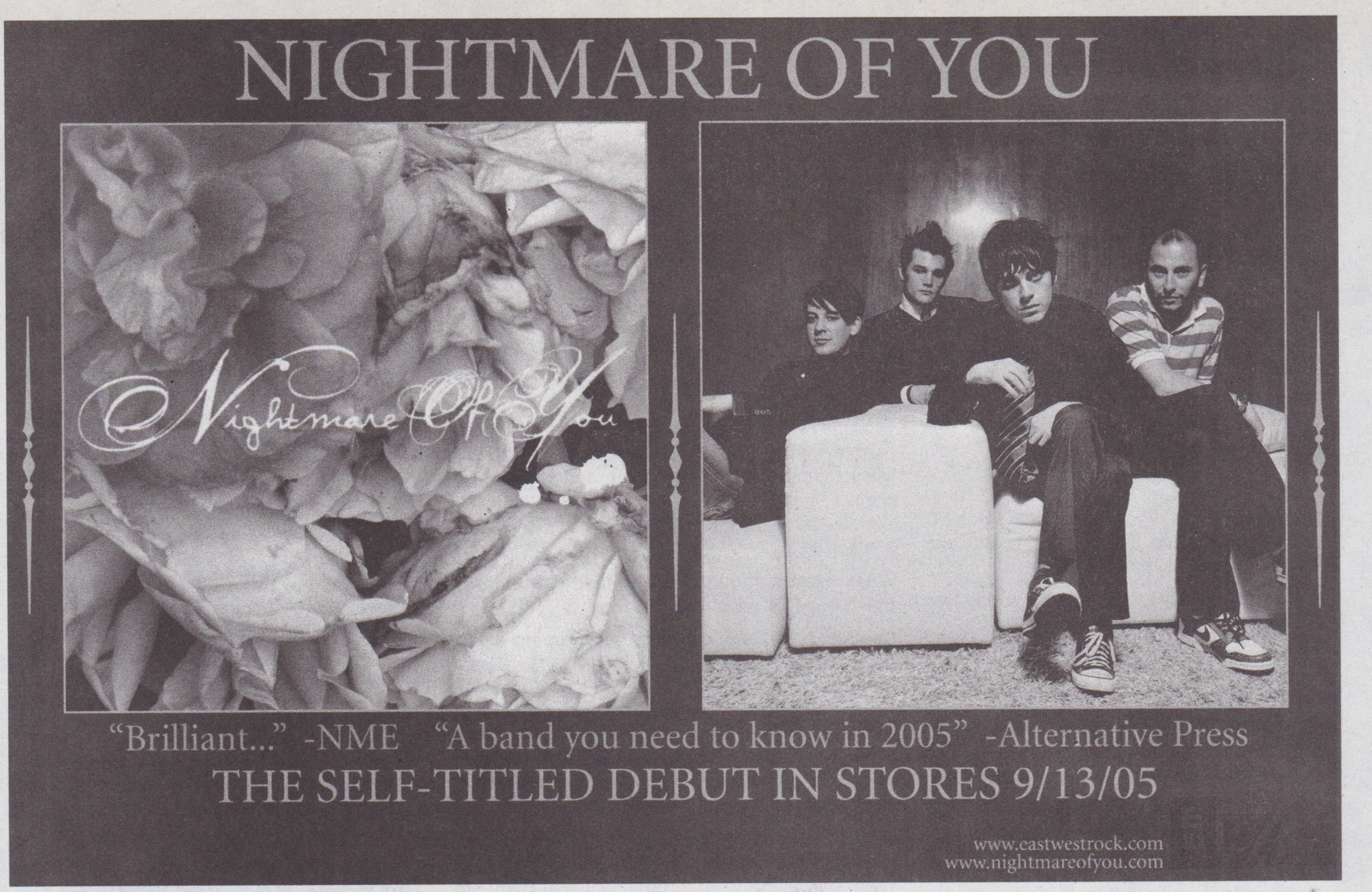
"Rotten I" is probably my favorite song on the album in terms of lyrics. This song combines my love of hunting with my innate ability to play mind-games with people and be successful. I wanted to paint the listener a picture with most all of my lyrics. It is important for the listener to have a strong visual image to help relate to pain, struggles, defiance, or, in this case, predatory games.

**Being that the rest of the band is from Montreal, have you guys ever thought of writing songs in French?**

I am American, so writing songs in French is not an option.

www.aperfectmurdermusic.com

2005 "Strength through Vengeance" (Victory)
2005 "Blood Covered Wounds/Rehearsal" (Cyclop Media)
2004 "Unbroken" (Victory)
2003 "Cease to Suffer" (Goodfellow)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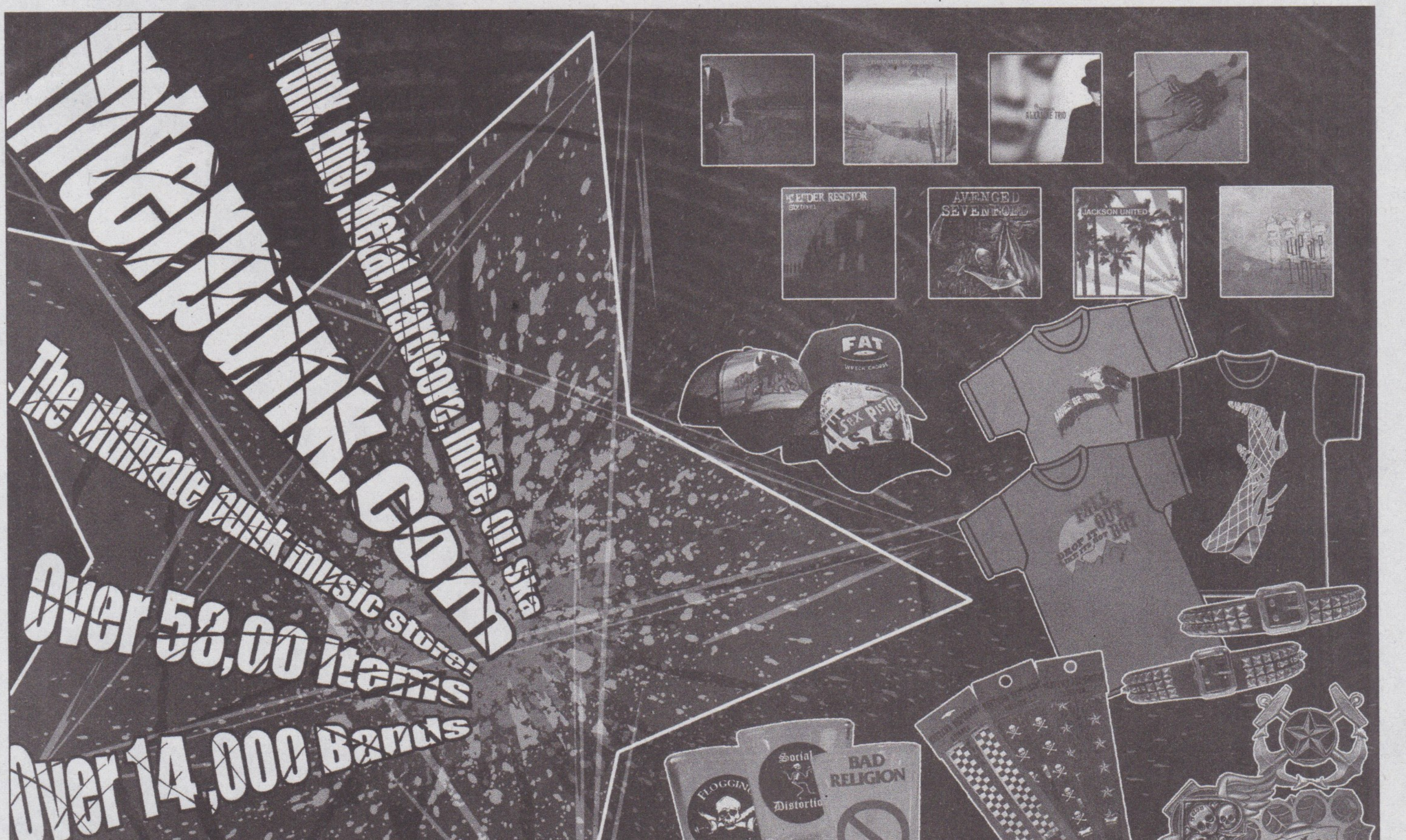
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**by Rondi Collins**

A lyricist on his own, Oakland-based Ismail Azeem is most known for his previous group affiliations, like with Telefunken and his later collaborations with the very underrated Variable Unit. Hell, you may have even seen Azeem on the stage at Lollapalooza back in 1994. What you probably wouldn't guess, at least at first, is that Azeem has turned his massive skills at poetry (of which he was featured on by PBS for a poetry special) and interminggles with his rhymes, while he'll still make time to talk shit on everything from phony rappers to Clear Channel. His latest solo album, "Show Business," places him at the skill level of veterans like Del, Q-Tip and even the creature known as MF Doom. A few moments with Azeem.

**Where are you from?**

I'm from New Jersey. But by the time I was 17, I had lived in Atlanta, Los Angeles, Miami, and Oakland, where I live now.

**You seem to be a very active musician. Does music occupy most of you time?**

Nah, living takes up most of my time. For music to take up most of my time, I'd have to be wealthy...at least rich. I live in West Oakland on 20-something Street. I ain't rich... yet!

**How'd you get with Bomb Records for "Show Business"?**

I talked to Bomb originally about a single. It grew into a whole album from there. As a free agent artist, sometimes you have to go into "hustle mode" and start reaching for people you know in the business who might need help on a project . I've been real busy lately and haven't had to go into that mode for a while.

**How'd you hook up with Tiye Selah on F.U.W.?**

She's sharp. She actually beat me in a rap contest about 10 years ago. I never knew who she was till we met about a year ago at the Roti Truck. We did the track at her place that day just for the fun of it. It ended up on the record 'cause it was a tight song and I was just going through some heavy shit at the time and you can hear it in my voice. It's one of my favorite tracks on the album.

**How would you describe the influence that working with Variable Unit has had on you? What different characteristics does that group bring out of you?**

To quote from Elihu's Lesson, "There are two selves; the higher and the lower self. The higher self is justice, mercy, love and right; the lower self is what the higher self is not."- Circle Seven. With VU, I wrote with only my higher self and tried to write lyrics without the usual bragging and abstract lyricism. I forced myself to write from a human perspective as opposed to some cat in Oakland on some ill shit.

**What, ideally, should fuel and inspire music?**

Emotions. That's the biggest secret.

**Do you have any other projects going on or coming up?**

I'm touring a one man show titled "Rude Boy". Its an hour long theater performance of a character named Johnny Burke who is a janitor at a Mexican cardboard box factory. He tells his life story. It's raw emotion and comedy and it has become my favorite thing to do.

**Is there anyone in particular that you would like to collaborate with?**

Yeah, I always wanted to do a joint with Red Man. My cousin M.Sayyid 'cause he can't never get to the post office. Tell Dre to call me to. I wanna colab with Donald Trump or the Sultan of Bruni. Fuck it, I'll settle for the Mayor or the owner of the local 711. As long as we are collaborating for real.

**Does spirituality or religion play a role in your music?**

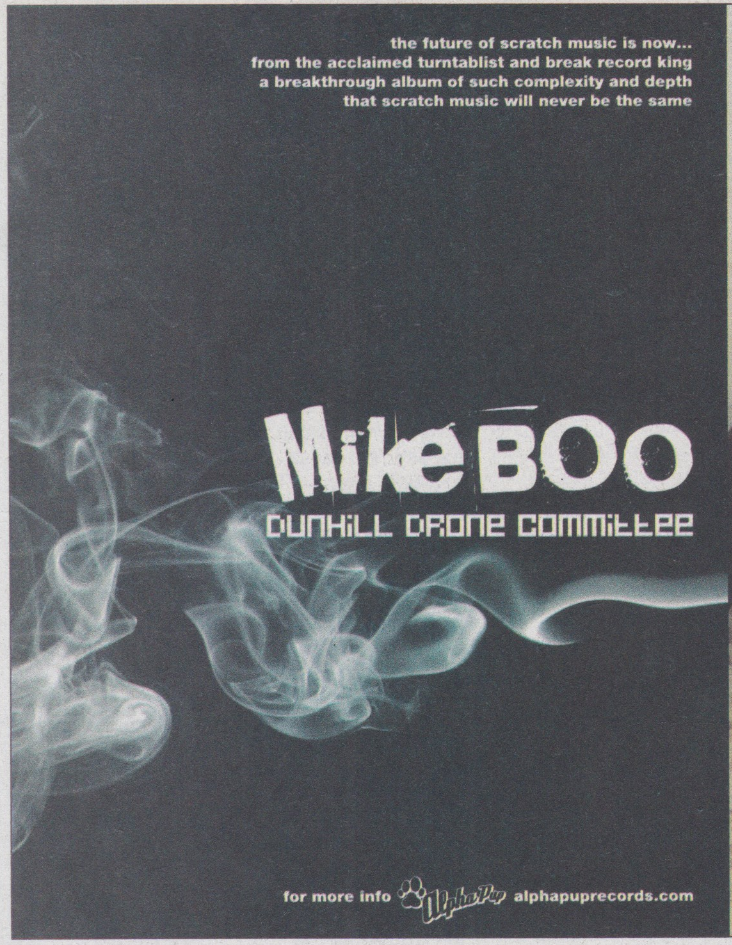
Religion is something you do Sundays. Spirituality is constant in every day life. So yeah, I'm spiritual. Not really religious.

**Are you interested in or involved in any other art forms? Like graf, sculpture, etc..?**

I used to be a graf artist. I wasn't very good. In Miami I was down with F.A. Crew. I ran with some cats who are now OG's. DeKay and Mega who I'm looking for and a couple other cats but that was way back when. Some of those dudes is dead, like my man Shaun Dollar. I still do Spoken Word (not poetry) when the feeling hits, but "Rude Boy" and what ever follows as far as theater is concerned, that's the form I'm leaping into now. Also Azeem and DJ Zeph as "Alpha Zeta" is coming out on Future Primitive. As soon as this last joint is done...

www.widehive.com/azeem

2005 "MayheMystics Outbreaks" (Wide Hive)
2004 "MayheMystics" (Wide Hive)
2004 "Show Business" (Bomb Hip Hop)
2003 "Handbook for the Apocalypse" (Wide Hive)
2001 "Craft Classic" (Stray)
2000 "Garage Opera" (Heratik)
1999 "Let Them Talk" (Slash U)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by Gordon Downs

## "I've seen some shit!"

exclaims Emily Joyce, drummer and vocalist for the quirky outfit Bunky, while giggling with laughter from an undisclosed location in San Diego. A transplant from Boston, Joyce has lived and worked within the San Diego music scene since her arrival in "America's Finest City" in September of 1996. The "shit" which she speaks of, are the many different variables that go hand in hand with existing within the world of independent rock.

Having worked at music venues in Boston and San Diego, Joyce speaks honestly and shoots from the hip. "I've been plagued my whole life trying to figure out what the hell I'm supposed to do with my life," she ruminates. "I still don't think I've totally figured it out. But music is definitely one thing that I've found." And we should all thank Jehovah that she found the music, or rather that the music found her.

"I gave her an album that I made because she really seemed to strike me as really charismatic and goofy and she should be a star, like a singer or something," says resident San Diego producer Rafter Roberts (and the other half of Bunky) from his recording studio also based out of San Diego. "I also gave the CD to her because I wanted her to like me." He adds with a chuckle. Roberts is a musician's musician, and is the impresario behind Bunky's sound.

It's clear on Bunky's debut album, "Born To Be A Motorcycle" that Joyce is the heart of Bunky, and in some ways, Roberts' muse. "He gave me a CD of some of his music, and I was totally blown away," Joyce recalls of when she first met Roberts in 1999. Adding, "Then I didn't see him for six months."

Six months? Just where the fuck was Rafter during this six month hiatus? "I was probably in my garage." He deadpans. "Making music and goofing around. I've been a life-long 4-tracker and screw around kinda guy."

"Then he called me and said he was thinking about starting a band with me and some of his other friends," recalls Joyce. "And I was like, are you kidding? When's the first practice?"

Though before entering that first practice session, Joyce had to tackle the task of learning an instrument that she could command at will. She settled on the drums and quickly mastered the skins while also handling the bulk of Bunky's vocals. "I remember the first time we played together," Roberts says, "it was really awkward." Yet despite that first awkward throwdown, Joyce and Roberts braved through the early stages of starting a band and eventually began gigging around San Diego as Bunky. "We didn't play our first show until 2001." Joyce assures me.

While some bands are easy to label punk, ska, or even Dixieland jazz, Bunky does indeed defy all definitions and labels, as is evident on, "Born To Be A Motorcycle". The record contains elements of everything from punk rock, classic rock, indie rock and a definite nod to jazz. Trying to sum Bunky up in a phrase: A romp. A joyous romp! Pure unadulterated fun, channeled and delivered via the medium of music.

One of the most noticeable attributes to Bunky's sound, aside from Joyce's unbelievably beautiful and dynamic voice, is the presence of a horn section in almost every song. "We've kind of always had horns, but not necessarily a horn section until last year," Roberts explains of Bunky's own personal towers of power. "All our friends know our songs and if we call them and ask if they want to play with us that night, and they don't have anything going on, maybe they'll come down and play with us." It's casual like that, and in that casualness, Bunky is able to kick out the jams without hesitation or blunder.

Having only played a handful of shows outside of Southern California, you would think Bunky would be gearing up for the standard get in the van tour of the states. Though as it currently stands, reality is dictating otherwise for a full on Bunky tour. Roberts is expecting a child soon, and even though their first album was just released in the spring of 2005, Roberts and Joyce are already hard at work trying to piece together their second album before Roberts' brood is birthed into the world. "We're going to try and wrap up our second album before the baby comes," Roberts says of the progress regarding their next record. "I think that's doable. We're getting kinda close already. I'm just going to have to kinda feel it out and see how it goes." Where Roberts fails to give insight as to what the second album may pertain, Joyce more than obliges with some info on what fans could expect. "I'm not quite sure if there's a theme?" explains Joyce. "There are some more sad songs on there, some more heart-string pullers. And there's some silly stuff. There's a song about a dinosaur and a hippopotamus. I dunno. You'll just have to wait and see I guess."

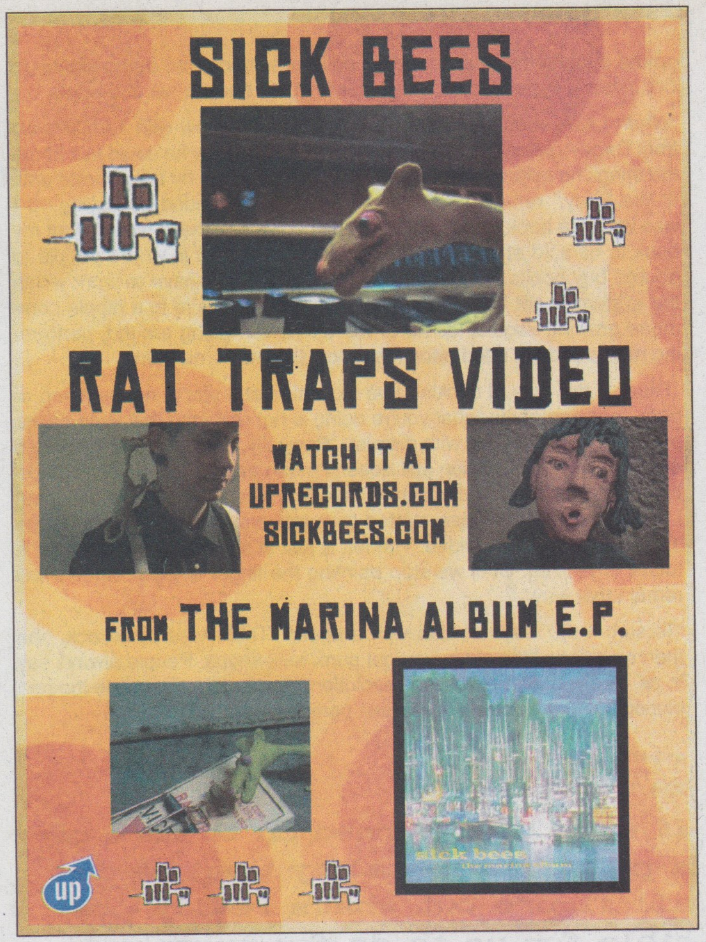
Given the time line it took for these two to put out their first record, fans can definitely expect Bunky's second album to be released sometime this decade. I end every interview with a query of, "Do you have a message for the children?" Both Emily and Rafter were asked this question independently of one another. Their answers were profound and hilarious.

Rafter Roberts: "Yeah, figure out how to have fun without TV or drugs. You see the thing is if they learn how to have fun without drugs, then they can experiment with [drugs] and have even more fun. You should be able to use drugs to have fun, but not rely on drugs to have fun.

Emily Joyce: "Yes I do. Can I get back to you on it?"

2005 "Born To Be A Motorcycle" (Asthmatic Kitty)

www.asthmatickittyrecords.com
www.bunkymusic.com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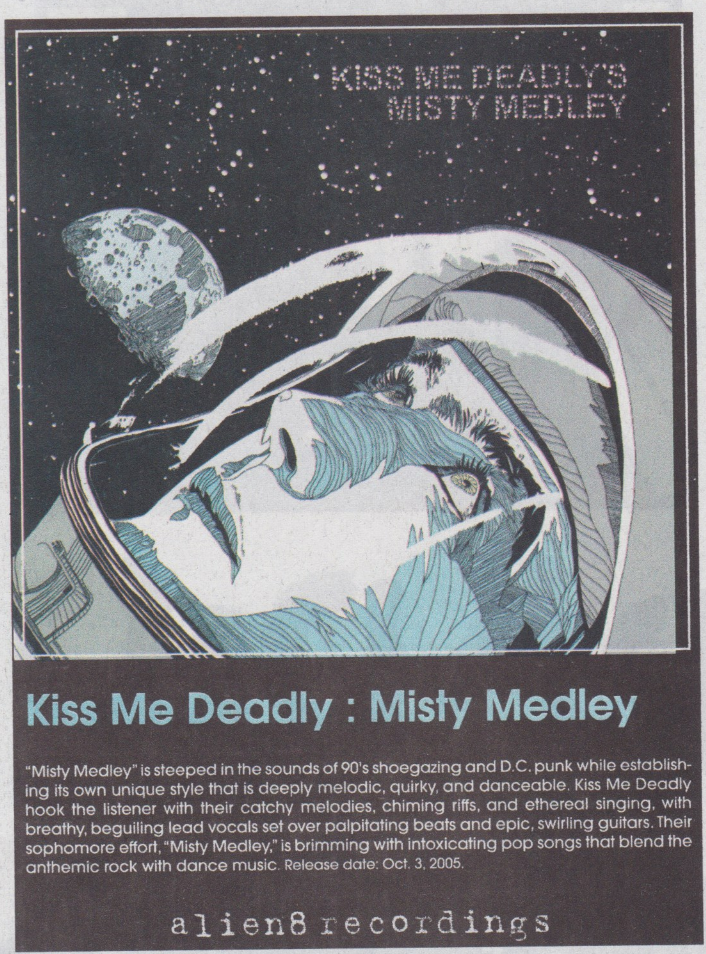
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**by James Wright**

Over the course of music history, there have been few bands that have truly embodied the spirit of the political leftist ideology and merged it with rock guitars successfully. The Clash were champions of the left in the early '80s, Rage Against the Machine screamed injustice in the '90s, while System of a Down and Anti-Flag still preach the values of socialism to the masses today.

California's Kill Radio are looking to add their name to that list with the release of their Columbia Records debut, "Raised On Whipped Cream". Seething with disdain for America's current political agenda, the album is packed with huge hooks, abrasive riffs and sing along choruses that make Kill Radio the equivalent of a sugar coated razorblade.

"We wanted to start a band with some real substance, a band that could effect change." says Kill Radio vocalist Brandon Jordon. "This album is just our thoughts and our feelings on tape."

Those thoughts and feelings are about as subtle as a baseball bat to the head. From the opening punk rock fury of 'A.M.E.R.I.K.A' to the horrors of capitalism and materialism in 'Penis Envy', "Raised On Whipped Cream" unleashes a whirlwind of political fury with the intention of starting a conscious revolution within listeners.

"We're not in a political band or writing political songs in order to defeat George Bush, it's more like, if ourselves or even Green Day can turn more people on to politics, then more people can understand what's possible in this world." says Jordon matter of factly. "That's what politics are, the art of the possible. If we all get turned on to more of a political mentality then we can all figure out what's really possible for us to do for ourselves."

Despite their melodic punk rock sound, their political agenda is what has critics and fans alike raising an eyebrow. From the war on Iraq and the Patriot Act to corrupt corporations and media manipulation, Kill Radio have been far from quiet as they have made their voices heard, loud and clear.

"America could have used the tragedy of September 11th as an opportunity to set a good example to the rest of the world. Instead, they used it as an opportunity to go the other way and wage war against the world." says Kill Radio bassist Dirty. "The government has just perpetuated this mass hysteria in order to shift the ball into their court, so they can pass legislation that gives the unlimited power to do whatever they want. I don't think the average, blue collar American understands things like the Patriot Act or how badly it's screwing them. The government has gone and done whatever it wants and the media hasn't really argued against them, which is just sad. "

"They're able to work off the leverage of fear. There are a lot of educated and knowledgeable people in this country, but when they get paranoid or fearful, all that education can just be washed out." adds Jordon. "People just seem to have placed their questions and they way they question things on the back burner because the nation could crumble at any minute. People were just scared because they heard all these stories about how their drinking water might be poisoned or how their kids shouldn't go to the mall because it's going to be bombed. The government doesn't create paranoia, but they put these ideas out there and people choose whatever way they want to interpret them. I'm just hoping that intelligent people rally and that everyone stays proactive and informed."

With a message that leans heavily towards the left, Kill Radio have come under attack because the band is signed to Columbia Records, a major corporate entity. When asked if their political agenda and being signed to Columbia is hypocritical, Jordon quickly fires back at his detractors.

"When I was about 17 years old, I read an interview with Tom Morello from Rage Against the Machine and they asked how he could talk about the things he talked about, when his band is funded by a corporate entity like Sony." remembers Jordon. "Morello responded by saying, 'If I was writing a book about overthrowing capitalism, then I would want my book to be sold at Barnes and Noble because that is where people to go and buy books.' I think that is exactly right. We have to work within the system to get out of the system. Its not like we're in a hippie commune growing vegetables here, we're in a van going around, performing music and we need people to know that we're out here."

"There is this way of thinking that dictates that if you're not suffering or poor, then somehow, what you're doing is not real, and that is complete bullshit." jumps in Dirty with disgust. "Basically, unless you're deformed or poor, then your opinion just doesn't mean as much and your convictions just aren't real. I don't know how that whole thing got started, but I think it might have been started by members of the right-wing in the '60s to keep the left divided. The left is just in shambles and the right is totally organized. Until we stop pointing the finger at each other, it will remain that way."

"To sum it up," says Jordan with a sneer. "There was punk rock, and then as it got a little older, you got punk rock snobs. People always say to us, 'Are you trying to start a revolution?' Its like, "No, because the revolution's already begun. We're just participants in it."

www.killradiorevolution.com

2004 "Raised On Whipcream" (Sony)

**If we all get turned on to more of a political mentality then we can all figure out what's really possible for us to do for ourselves.**

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# Shadows Fall

## Demand Attention and Command it

**by Bushman**

The state of American Metal has never been so vital since the late 80's. After thrash burned out into death and the emergence of hardcore tried to go straight edge while grunge od'd in the northwest, metal seemed to get a bit too nu for most as the 90's came to a close. Blame it on pre-millenial tensions, but the turn of the century brought on change of guard for American Metal. Metalcore hybrids, while admittedly are killing their own scene in sheer overabundance as of late, spawned some truly technical and devastating metal. A slew of bands, mostly from the Northeastern section of the country, not only showed the rest of the US how a 'scene' is supposed to come together (witness the tons of metal 'fests' and hardcore gatherings that are unique to that area) but also defined movement in sound. Somewhere in the grey area between speedy old school thrash that was listening to their Iron Maiden and late 80's/early 90's east coast hardcore is where you will find one of the foremost representatives of this new school of metal, Shadows Fall.

And while they may not have single handedly changed the landscape of metal, they have, with essentially their last two releases, made strides for metal not seen since a bunch of kids starting spilling out of the San Francisco bay area in the mid 80's. Those same two releases, 2002's "The Art of Balance" and 2004's "The War Within" set sales records for their label, Century Media, which is no small feat considering that along with it's partners and sub-labels, represents more metal than most of you even knew existed. And while there are previous releases both with current singer Brian Fair and ex-singer Philip Labonte (now in All That Remains), it's seems to be those last two albums that most accurately represent the bands current sound and direction.

It is also those two releases that earned the band their entry in the class of NWOAHM (New Wave of American Heavy Metal) which is a play on the genre often referenced by Metallica as their major influence, the NWOBHM (New Wave of British Heavy Metal) represented by bands that came out in the late 70's. As part of the new school, Shadows Fall is a name that gets dropped with other bands such as Unearth, God Forbid, Lamb of God and Killswitch Engage, all of which is no coincidence coming from the same geographic region. It's a high distinction and well deserved with Shadows Fall.

Graduating from their side stage stint on OzzFest two years ago, this summer saw the band featured as a mainstage attraction. And while their set didn't have the high school drama that followed that night between Iron Maiden and Sharon Osbourne, it did rip some severe metal in the mid-day sun. They held their own and impressed many. Not an easy thing to do when you are the new kid in school.

Singer Brain Fair answers some questions from a tent behind the mainstage at Ozzfest, San (fucking hot) Bernardino.

**Mainstage Ozzfest band!**

It's crazy man. We did the second stage two years ago, which was definitely a break out point for us, things were going well and that pushed it even further. And two years later to offer us such an opportunity goes to show that we've definitely continued and excelled since that first opportunity. It feels like we've earned it. It's our spot.

**Describe the difference between this tour and the last (besides obviously getting a better slot and on the mainstage!)**

It's a lot harder to blow up the mainstage as it is the second stage. The seats are really hard for us to deal with as a band compared to what we are used to. On the second stage, it's really like a big club, there are no seats. So the crowd is such a huge part of the show. But here on the mainstage, you realize what it's like to rock an arena. It's all about what's happening on stage. There are no pits, no crowd surfing, so you gotta demand attention and command it. It's a new challenge, which is awesome, but it's been amazing. The number of people that have no idea who we are that we are playing in front of is incredible. That's just a huge opportunity. Over on the second stage, even though there are a lot of people, most are fairly familiar with what's going on in the underground. The mainstage is a lot of dudes in Iron Maiden shirts, eating nachos, that you have to get the fuck out of their seats.

**Any downsides to being on such a crazy tour?**

You really gotta kill it every night to stand out. We are going on after Black Label Society. Zack Wylde, one of the greatest guitar players, ever. And it's not an easy thing to follow. And also knowing that Maiden and Sabbath are coming up, and that's what those people who paid $200 for those front row seats are waiting for. You gotta kick their ass. But every one of those you get out of their seats, you win. Even if it's a small percentage, it doesn't matter. Our main fanbase, they are on the lawn. It's a tough spot but it's worth it.

**Describe the Boston scene as you were coming up.**

I was really lucky. I started going to hardcore shows at a real early age. Mike D from Killswitch Engage was the first person to take me to my real first Boston hardcore show when I was like 13 years old. It was such a crazy scene, but really tight knit. Anyone who was down, was down, it didn't matter. There was a lot of great bands that were pushing the envelope. Even back then, metal and hardcore were real mixed up. You would see Sick of it All with Napalm Death and it wasn't that weird. There were still fights. But some scenes, hardcore and metal were completely separate worlds. I think that's one of the reasons Boston bands have been doing their own thing for years. Like Converge, Killswitch Engage and us, we all came out of the same scene with the same influences, but took it in totally different directions. No one really sounded like each other. That was what our scene was all about, trying new shit. Back then, there used to be a lot of great bands, but no one came to see us. Now, at least there is an audience which is great.

**What metal band was responsible for putting you on such a distinctive path to metal?**

Iron Maiden was a huge one. And early Ozzy. The first few Randy Rhoades records were huge for me. The first album I ever bought with my own money was "Blizzard of Ozz" the same day I bought Men At Work "Business As Usual" from my paper route money. So early Ozzy and early Maiden. The actual moment I knew that this was the only thing I wanted to do, was when I was third row to see Bon Jovi and Cinderella. Cinderella came out and I was like, "This is the best job ever. I can't believe people get paid to do this."

## We are not a very Hollywood type band. There is not a lot of glitz and glamour in Shadows Fall. We are a bunch of beer drinking, metal head, Red Sox fans from Massachusetts that have a good time and hang out.

**First concert?**

Lionel Richie, "Dancing on the Ceiling" tour with Sheila E. After the Bon Jovi show, I went to almost every arena show I could when I young. I saw the 'And Justice For All' tour and that Def Leppard in the round tour. But then I started going to all ages hardcore shows and kind of turned my back on the arena world. When I realized I get to sing along with my favorite band, into the mic, and I'm not going to get thrown out?... Awesome.

**Do you see your band as a representative of the American metal scene, in the sense that, Shadows Fall is one of the bands that people will throw out when describing the current state of metal. Or the NWOAHM?**

I think we do, and it's an honor to be associated with that scene, but at the same time, music is so universal, especially how widespread and how easy to find it is now with internet and cable, that their really is no distinct sound from anyplace. There used to be more with the traditional German power metal bands or Swedish melodic death metal bands, but now, people are taking from every school and bringing in influences no one ever saw coming. It is cool to be seen as the forerunners of the US metal scene, but I hope our music transcends any of that. Like Metallica, they are a US metal band, but they are the worlds. They can't be pigeon holed as a bay area thrash band anymore. But it is an honor, especially with the bands we are being categorized with, Lamb of God, Killswitch Engage, not only are we great friends with, but also fans of. So it's cool to be in that category, but at the same time, we just do what we do because we love music. It had nothing to do with putting US metal back on the map. We just love metal.

**At what point did you realize the potential of Shadows Fall as a band?**

Before I was in it, I thought, boy these guys are great musicians. And at that time, they were really young as well, like 17 and I was already impressed, but thought they needed to focus on song writing if they are going to take it to another level. When I jammed with them the first time and they played me the new songs, they had realized you don't have to write 8 minute epics for every tune. They started writing really good songs. And that's when I knew that we'd get together and do something that was going to work out.

**When you joined for the "Of One Blood" album, how much of that was already written?**

I'd say about two-thirds of it was already written. Some of it was actually "Somber Eyes..." material that we just revamped. When I heard those songs, that's when I knew. At first, I was like, ah, I had been in Overcast for eight years when they broke up, and I didn't know if I wanted to go through this again. Once I heard the songs, I knew I had to take the chance, I was so stoked on it.

**Did you ever go [illegible]zzfests in years back, as a fan, and imagine you'd be a mainstage act a mere handful of years later?**

I never did. The first one I ever went to was when we were meeting up with Hatebreed to start a tour in 2002 and they were playing the last date of OzzFest in Texas. That was the first time I ever saw an OzzFest. I had no idea how big it was or how crazy it was. We played a million shows with Hatebreed, but I never saw them in front of eight or nine thousand people. I was like, holy shit, this is a great idea. They benefited from Ozzfest without a doubt. For their type of music, they get such a crowd reaction. They are the kind of band, that no matter how good other bands did that day, and this was also back when OzzFest had more nu-metal bands and commercial rock stuff, and they would stand out like, 'Holy shit, what the fuck just happened?!'

**This 2005 OzzFest has a very credible metal lineup.**

I think over the last few years, like the 2003 one was the first time they had bands like us, Killswitch, Cradle of Filth, Sworn Enemy, the kind of bands that had been touring for years and did have an actual fan base, as opposed to relying on major label buy-ons. So now they have realized that the second stage is a draw unto itself and they are putting credible bands in front of people.

**Craziest band you ever toured with?**

Lamb of God is pretty much up there. Randal Blythe (singer) is the reason. He is my key drinking partner in the metal world. We go back. We have a long standing drinking contest that has never really ended. That band is fueled by nothing but tension and hate. It works out great.

**Century Media and it's Nuclear Blast ties (and numerous sub labels) represents a HUGE chunk of the metal world. Thoughts on being Century Media's best selling artist for two albums in a row?**
It's pretty awesome. One of the main reasons we originally signed with CM was that it was really small, but what we liked, was that they had The Gathering and Krisiun on the same label. We figured we were a perfect bridge for a lot of the styles they represented on their label. They grew as we grew and that's all you can ask for a label is that they step it up as the band steps up.

**Videos. You guys aren't much for the dramatics. It's usually set up somewhere, in a house, in a field, invite your friends and jam out. Any reason for the simple approach to video making?**
We are not a very Hollywood type band. There is not a lot of glitz and glamour in Shadows Fall. We are a bunch of beer drinking, metal head, Red Sox fans from Massachusetts that have a good time and hang out. We didn't want to present some image that was untrue. For our first videos, we were really nervous about the idea of a video. We are still kind of punk rock kids at heart. So the first video is just us in a room. Y'know, like (Pantera) 'Five Minutes Alone' style.

**What's one of your favorite music videos?**
Any 'Shout Out The Devil' era Motley Crue video.

**Matthew Bachands vocals add a great smooth voice dynamic (like in the backing vocals on "What Drives The Weak"). How do you work together on those songs?**
I write all the lyrics, but I also write a lot of the melody lines that he may end up singing. A lot of times, in the live frame, I'm like, I'm going to need to take a breath and there is no way I can possibly do this. That way we knew we would have way more power live and it adds some textures for the record as well. And sometimes, there's a few notes that I know that he's gonna nail. He has such a more smooth melodic voice than I do. Whatever is gonna fit the song the best. In the studio, you are trying to create the best version of the song you can.

**Your message board says the last date of Ozzfest is crazy. Describe the anarchy that will ensue.**
You never know what the hell is gonna happen. This many bands that are all ready to fuck with each other… and we have a scary spot. We are in between Zach who is pretty much ruthless and Mudvanye who are really good friends of ours. I think the key to that is to try and act first.

**There is a lot of downtime on touring, and from looking at the last years of your lives, that seems to be all you have been doing. Once the routine of playing so much sets in, what do you do to entertain yourself out on the road?**
You gotta find something, because there is a lot of hurry up and wait. Everything is so hectic until you get where you are going and then you sit around and do nothing. So for OzzFest, we got a bunch of minibikes, which the reason I have no skin on my knee (displays said goriness), cruise around, check out the different bands. I always bring my guitar and little home studio lab. I work on some things, not really Shadows Fall based, just to kill some time and fool around with some stuff. We do have the little Shadows Fall studio set up on the bus to. It's really hard to concentrate on the road, but it's there in case someone has some ideas. We have written full songs on the road in the past so it's good to have that option. A lot of video games. A lot of Tiger Woods Golf. I like sports games. NBA Street. We have a Playstation2 on the bus. We had an Xbox last year until a full beer dumped right into the grate on the side. It actually blew up, so it was kind of cool. But we couldn't play anymore. Aside from that, a lot of drinking, a lot of blazing.

**What bands should kids be listening to more nowadays (both old and new).**
Joy Division should be listened to by everyone. The Smiths should be listened to by everyone. And if you are not already listening to Maiden and Sabbath and you are reading about metal bands, you are just confused and way behind. Think outside the box. Spiritualized is another band everyone should check out.

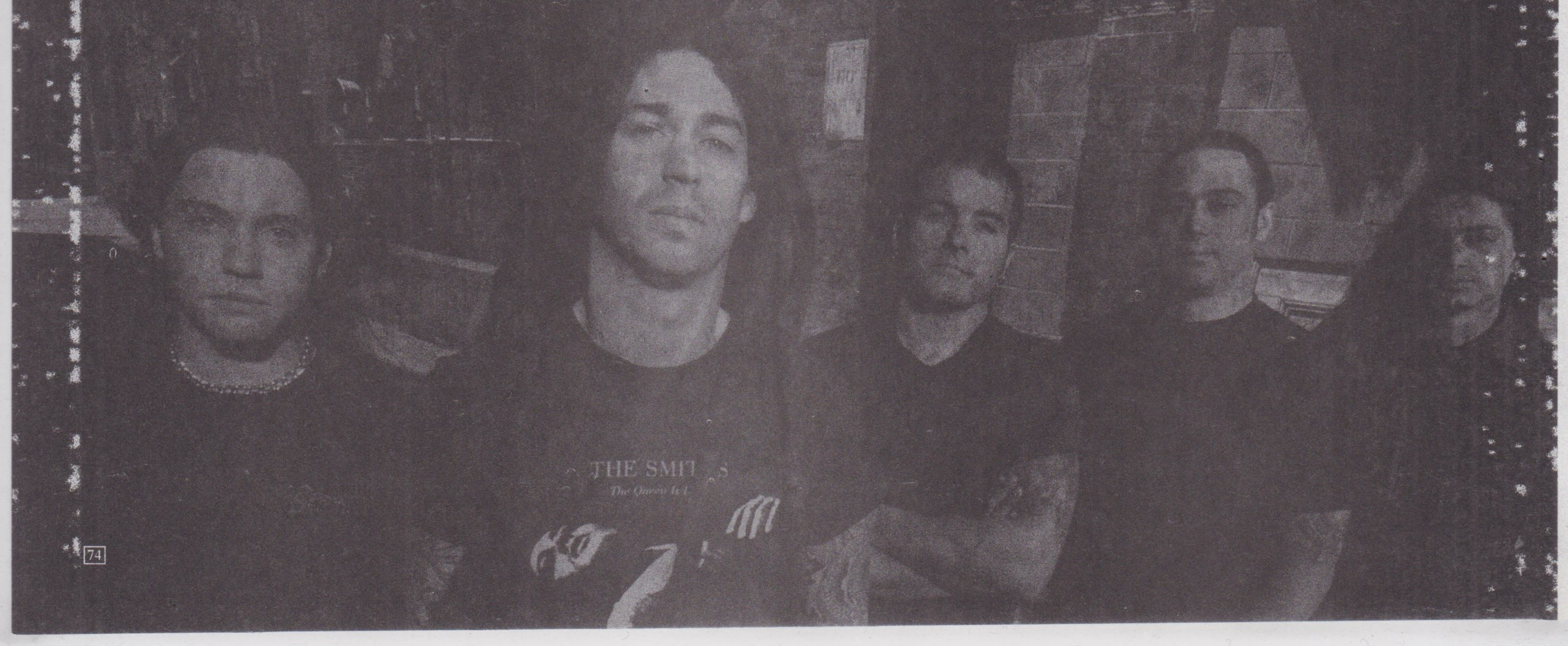
**What are your thoughts on the Swedish/Norwegian metal movements that are seemingly on the rise like their American peers?**
For us, the Swedish influence has been huge. At The Gates was one of the most influential Swedish bands on us. As far as Norwegian bands, I like a lot of the symphonic black metal bands. I really love Dissection and bands like that. But as far as that whole scene, it got a little crazy there for awhile. I'm not in the habit of stabbing dudes just to be 'down'. There are so many on the second stage this year with The Haunted, Soilwork and Arch Enemy and InFlames on the main stage, it's so awesome to see. For years, no one knew of these bands because they just couldn't get over here and tour. It just wasn't worth it for them financially or for the label. Now, they can come over and tour and spread the word… it's huge.

**Shadows Fall isn't typically considered a 'political' band, but you tour a lot, and when you are an American on tour, your politics are challenged often. What subjects about America do people usually engage you on?**
You definitely get a little bit over seas. It's funny though, because our fans, are the typical metal-head, beer drinking, good time dudes. So we don't get it as much as maybe some of the hardcore bands. You can't go to France or Germany without talking about politics the second you walk out of the van. The biggest question is "How the fuck did George Bush win again." And honestly, I have no idea. I have never spoken to anyone who voted for him. I'm sure there are a lot of people who did, but I haven't met them yet.

**Lots of drugs around the Ozzfest scene. Your drug of choice?**
I'm definitely more of a 'from the earth' kind of guy, so I'm smoking some good herbs. But every now and then, when you are trying to sleep on the bus, some pharmaceuticals will help to knock you out. But I'm not much of an 'up' kind of guy, so I'll probably be just taking bong hits in the back lounge.

www.shadowsfall.com

2004 "The War Within" (Century Media)
2002 "The Art Of Balance" (Century Media)
2002 "Fear Will Drag You Down" (Century Media)
2001 "Deadworld" (Jvc Japan)
2000 "Of One Blood" (Century Media)
1998 "Somber Eyes To The Sky" (Lifeless)



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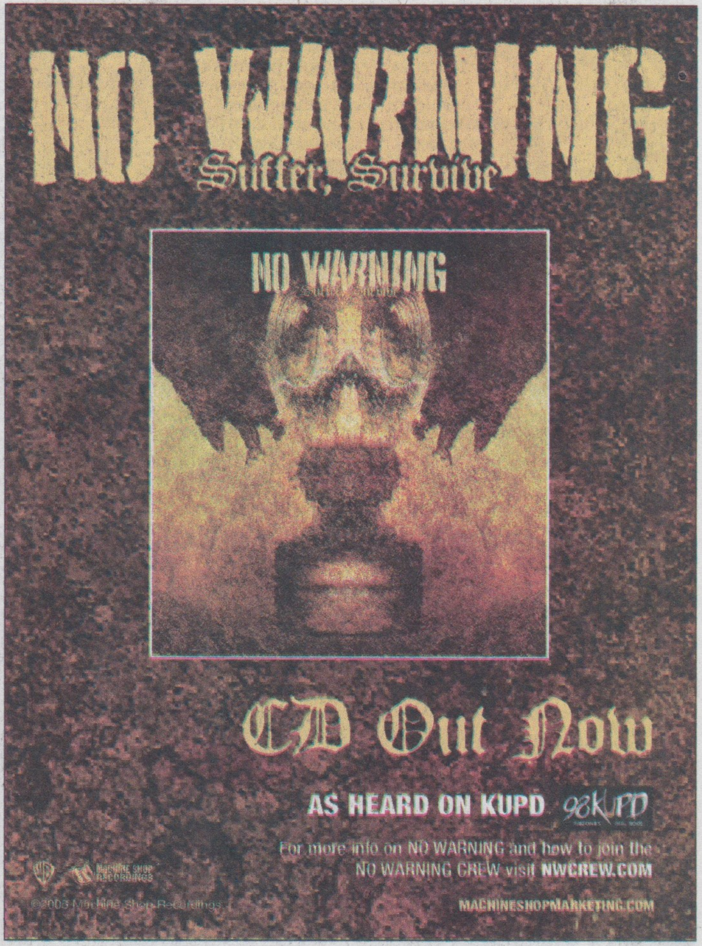
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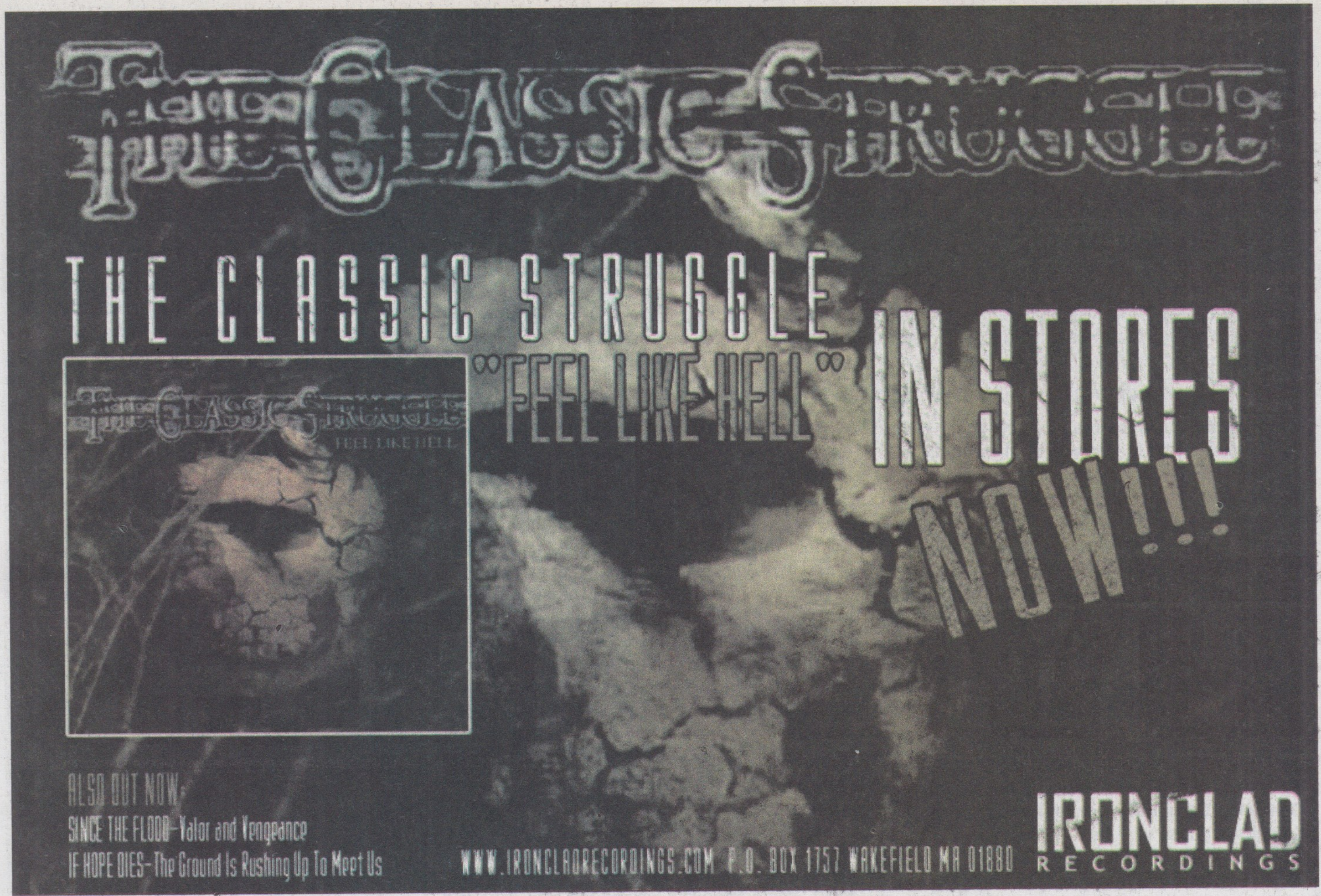
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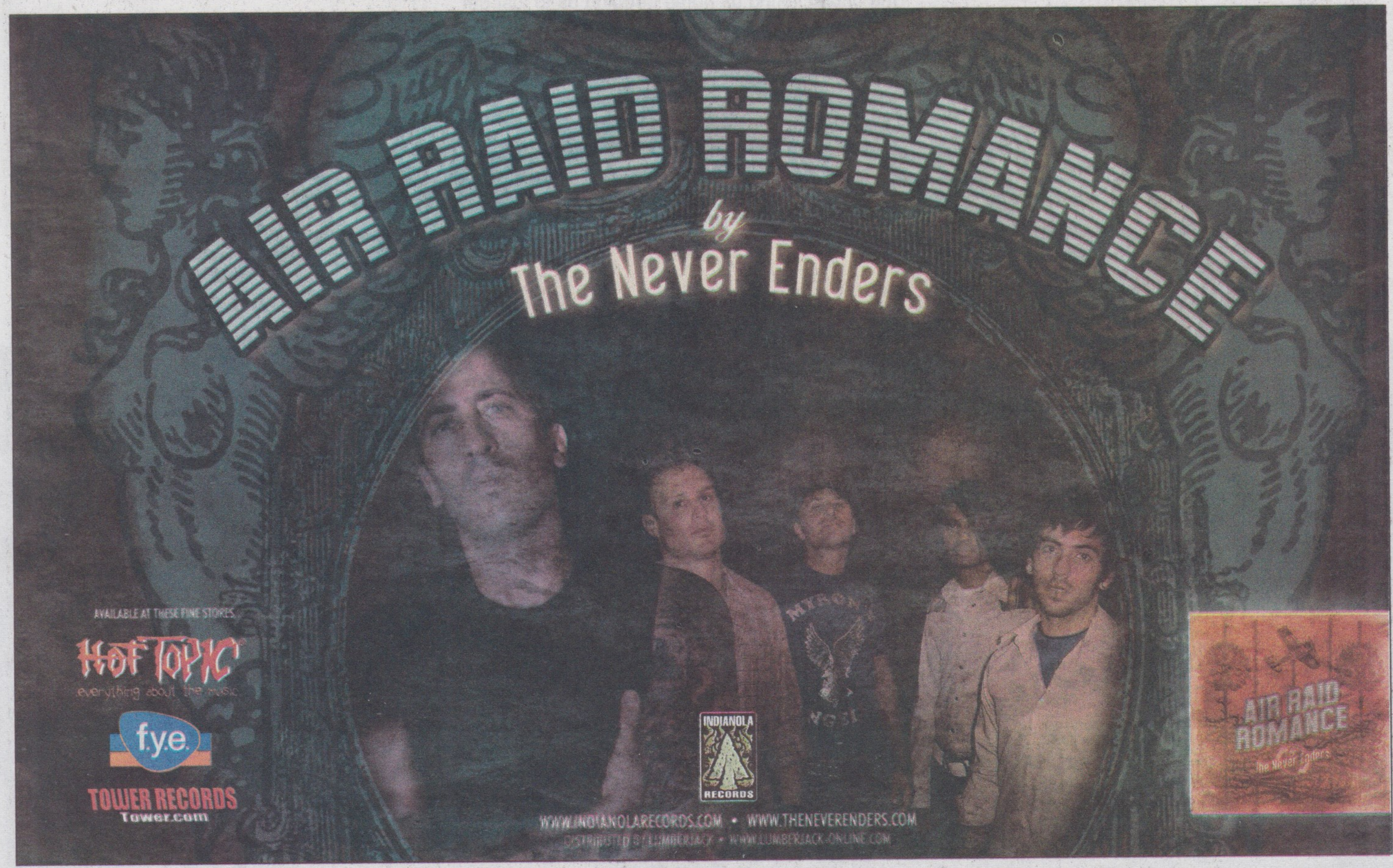
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AIR RAID ROMANCE

**by Cosmo Lee**

The words "Canada" and "bone-crunching" usually bring to mind 'hockey'. But since hockey is taking a big long nap, metal has picked up the slack. Voivod, Despised Icon, Kataklysm and Strapping Young Lad are just a few of Canada's fine metal exports. Recently, Thine Eyes Bleed joined the maple leaf metal elite with their debut album, "In the Wake of Separation".

First, press hype out of the way: one member of the band used to play in Kittie, while one is the brother of Slayer's Tom Araya. These facts may be bane or boon, but this band stands on its own. Thine Eyes Bleed combine Lamb of God-style new school thrash with death metal, black metal and even Dillinger Escape Plan-esque dissonance into one big ball of metallic fury.

While "In the Wake of Separation" goes down smoothly the first time, it really sinks in after repeated listens. This isn't your average everyday metalcore. There aren't any simplistic breakdowns or predictably melodic choruses. But there's a whole lot of great guitar playing. Sure, there are thrashy riffs and the obligatory Swedish-inspired harmonies, but there are also biting solos, complex arrangements and unexpectedly catchy parts. After hearing the anthemic solos in "Innocent Mind", just try to get them unstuck from your head.

Modern Fix caught up with vocalist Justin Wolfe to see how Canadians do it.

**Why are so there so many more good metal bands per capita in Canada than in the US?**
Really? You think so? Wow, you're the first person to ever ask that question. Where we are from [London, Ontario], there are a lot more punk/hardcore bands that are getting attention, although in the last few years, the music scene, much like the US, is becoming much more aggressive. It's mainly because there are so many bands around here doing the same thing. It's not a easy to tour here, so a lot of bands have the time to really work on their music. You have to in order to stand out. Canada is really a hard country to break out of, especially for metal.

**You guys have toured with a wide variety of bands such as Kittie, Superjoint Ritual and Candiria. Does this ever feel schizophrenic?**
(Laughs) I guess in a weird way, yeah. We have done a variety of different shows from the very beginning. We never really went out with a plan or a label for what type shows or bands we would fit with. When it came down to it, we would take anything we could get, and fortunately we landed some killer tours for a variety of different fan bases. This really helped us get off our feet and surprisingly enough we have went over quite well.

**What was the wildest story from your tour with Steve-O (from MTV's "Jackass")?**
We didn't actually do a full tour with the Steve-O but we did indeed open up on a few occasions. The craziest night was the first show in our hometown London, Ontario, it was fucked. The crowd was definitely the rowdiest crowd we have ever played in front of. There was such a weird mix of people. We had the jackass jocks dudes, punk rockers, metal heads, skids you name it. Some people loved us and some hated us. I can remember standing at the edge of the stage just watching five different circles clear with fights breaking out as a mini riot let loose. It was pretty wild to see kids go that nuts in such a small reserved city. Good for them. And then of course the after party, there was definitely a lot of drinking going on. Our sound guy (Morgan Russell) and I went out with the boys to a bar downtown afterwards and things got real messy. The last thing I remember was kicking the side door of a cab in the middle of the road for it to stop, then the cabby taking us home begging us to just get out of the cab insisting no money. We must have been asses.

**Your songs aren't that simple, any insight into the writing process?**
It's definitely becoming a strong point for the band. We write our songs riff by riff with everyone's input. We usually change the structure of our songs numerous times before we can settle as a unit and that is what seems to really work. We don't set out to write the most complicated songs we can, we just take it piece by piece and put it together, but what feels natural.

**Things in Canada seem so spread apart - does that make touring there difficult?**
Very much so, it makes things more expensive, especially the way our van drinks gas. When touring Canada, there is a lot more driving involved. When we hit the US, we can play almost double the amount of shows in a month that we could here. Over time it really adds up.

**Your bio says that each band member brings a "radically different perspective on music". What are those perspectives?**
The different perspectives come from the wide spread of age we have between members. We all come from a slightly different era of metal which brings a lot of different influences to the table. Everyone has their own unique style that we feel helps to make our music stand out.

**Your bio also calls the band "Canadian metal warriors". Did you write your bio yourselves?**
No. We did not write the bio ourselves. We came up with a lot of the ideas and it was put together for us. The 'Canadian Metal Warriors' thing, that comes from our sense of humor. We have a lot of fun with this band. I'm sure you can tell by the name, we don't care what other people think. We are Canadian, Metal and proud of it.

www.thineeyesbleed.com

2005 "In the Wake of Separation" (The End)

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LABEL the TRAITOR
THE BATTLE OF THE COMMON
"This melodic hardcore punk attack known as "The Battle Of The Common" is fun and interesting from beginning to end." - Pastepunk.com
"It's almost a relief that bands like this still exist." - Metalreview.com
"This is some serious fucking shit right here. These guys are blasting out some seriously solid hardcore." - AMP Magazine
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SMARTPUNK

**by Jason Schreurs**

Praises be to Boy Nights Out, the screamo band who came to their senses and decided to try something different. After the release of their 2003 album, "Make Yourself Sick" and constant touring, the group from Burlington, Ontario spiraled into an episode of self-loathing that was actually much deserved. Boys Night Out was one of the biggest perpetrators of the kind of bogus, love-gone-terribly-wrong-core that clogs the arteries of the hard-core scene. Screamo was and is a withering genre and kudos to these guys for realizing it from the very pits of its gullet. The product of this much-welcomed screamo recovering program is "Trainwreck", a masterful album that sets the dark/light dichotomy of Boys Night Out's sound to a morbid tale of remorse written by guitarist Jeff Davis. The resulting concept album is a 12-chapter descent into the hells of morbid regret and insanity, and is helmed by the master of theme albums, the one and only Machine (producer of Armor for Sleep, Lamb of God, King Crimson, Clutch, etc.). I recently chatted with Davis about the making of "Trainwreck" and how the band plucked themselves from the annals of the much-maligned screamo fiasco. Oh, and how I thought they sucked before...

**This album is kind of strange subject matter for a band to be writing about. Tell me about how it all came about.**

Yeah, it was... but it was cool from the get-go. I have a short story that I've written and [singer] Connor Lovat-Fraser and I thought it would cool to change this fictional short story into song form, into an album, and to break it up into what would be 12 songs. I showed Connor and said, 'I think we can make a cool record out of this.' So before any of the music was even written we just decided to break it up into 12 tracks and then go from there. It was a totally different way of doing things for us, but it was super fun.

**Honestly, I've never really been a fan of your band, but I've been listening to this new one non-stop. How does that make you feel?**

It feels great. It's very, very rewarding on all counts because it's the first time that all of us have really put 100 percent into writing something as a band. With our last CD, we weren't even a full-time band at the time. We were a weekend band that was putting out some CDs for a hardcore label and we didn't know what would become of us, so we were all kind of lazy, and didn't really care. Once we started touring and getting into it, we realized we were going to be a band. From there it was easy... and then it got a little too easy. So, on this one we decided to write music like a band.

**The songs on this record feel more natural. The biggest problem with most bands in your genre is they are so schizo and all over the place.**

That's good to hear because we definitely realized it with our own music. At the end of last year we stepped back and said, 'Look what we've been doing for the past couple of years, look at the bands we've toured with, and look at the state of music right now.' We had this period for a couple of months where we were really depressed and we had to do something. We had fallen into something that we really didn't want to fall into. We thought if we really pushed ourselves we could do something better than what we'd been doing. We just wanted to do something that we can be happy with, something that wouldn't bum us out anymore. Hopefully we did that.

**Where did the idea for your sound come from? It's a weird mix of poppy punk songs and metal riffs with dark lyrics. Does the morbid subject matter stem from being into death metal or something?**

It comes from us realizing from the beginning that we had some poppy stuff and saying, 'OK, what the hell are we going to sing about?' Lots of bands in the pop-punk genre had a lot of bubblegum, cheesy lyrics going on and we said, 'Let's just not do this. Let's write about serial killers!' Connor and I have always had an interest in stuff like that, so it was easy for us to write about. It was interesting and it was fun too! I've always liked when there's one thing going on, like a slow, flowing, poppy song, and once you really listen to it, you're like, 'Holy shit, what's this guy singing about here?' I've always been into that kind of thing.

**Do you ever get any negative response from fans who may have liked the poppier sounds and then realized what the songs are actually about?**

We had some people that wrote us off right away and said they just don't want to hear songs like that. That's why with this record we decided to write about different things than just murdering people and drinking ourselves to death. We decided to just get a story that covers a whole bunch of stuff. We're always hoping people take what we do with a grain of salt and realize, for the most part, that it's not literal. Even before this record, it's mostly been telling stories. It's a form of catharsis, taking something that might have happened to us in our lives and exorcising our demons and getting the worst out on paper in the form of art. We're not trying to glorify murdering people, it's just an interesting thing to write about. It's an interesting side of the human condition.

**When you got backlash over your lyrics, did you take it to heart?**

When we did get some backlash, it was just more of a bummer. We were just like, 'Ah, come on... smarten up. If you can't take this for what it is, then don't take it at all. Just leave us alone.'

**Did new member Kara [Dupuy] have any concerns about your lyrics, being a woman coming into the band?**

No, not at all. We've known her for awhile and we knew when we were writing

**We're not trying to glorify murdering people, it's just an interesting thing to write about.**

# BOYS NIGHT OUT

this that we needed a female vocalist for some songs. We definitely needed keyboards and synthesizers, and she was just the perfect candidate.

**What was it like working with Machine?**
It was amazing, man. It was super cool. We were talking to other producers and Karl from Ferret said he had this guy, Machine, who was into us and wanted to see if we can work together. So he flew him up to our jam space, for just a day, and we played him everything we were writing, and jammed a bunch of stuff, and we just hung out and clicked. We explained to him where we were headed with the record and what we envisioned it as and he said he'd love to be a part of it.

**It must have been a big change from your earlier recordings.**
Totally. We'd never been in a studio before, let alone work with a producer. We'd only ever done stuff in a basement, so it was a whole new world for us to walk into, and it was amazing. I could not picture anyone else having produced this record other than Machine. He just knew exactly what we wanted to do and there was never any butting of heads. We worked together really well.

**You mentioned being stuck in a rut. It seems like the Warped Tour this year is full of bands that are still stuck in that rut.**
It is kind of a bummer, but it has nothing to do with me. It's what the kids want to hear and it's what they love, and that's cool. This new genre of music that is bred from pop-punk and metal is what is most accessible to kids these days through all forms of media, and it's amalgamated into this festival, and it's what tens of thousands of kids in all of these cities want to see. And, hey, who am I to say anything about that? Because that's a cool thing. Personally, I don't really appreciate much of the music that goes on. But there are still great bands playing that I definitely have respect for and that I don't think are hurting music.

**One of the bands on Warped, Gym Class Heroes, sent props out to you guys recently. Now there's a band that is doing something different.**
Yeah, we toured with those guys. That was a good breath of fresh air because that was a time when we were only touring with screamo bands for like a year and a half, so being able to tour with a band like that was cool. It was dudes who were actually playing music. It was different and cool. It's screamo music that is really the bummer these days for us because that's the genre that we've been lumped in with. We don't expect to be breaking out of any genres, that could potentially be career suicide, but we just wanted to do something that we could be happy with artistically.

www.boysnightout.com

2005 "Trainwreck" (Ferret)
2003 "Make Yourself Sick" (Ferret)

# BLOOD DRIVE

**by DICK**

Birth control is anarchy. The pope is a Nazi. Catholics are the devil's allies in an ongoing cold war against drilling in ANWR without a condom. The only good pope might be a dead pope, definitely and doubly so for Nazi popes. Anarchic freedom! What could be worse than people living their lives? Somewhere someone is having sex, and they're unmarried and they're doing it for recreation, not procreation, and SPLASH! A big fiery ball of anarchy from the sky wipes us all out. God is punishing us for allowing gay men to exist. Satan is stoking a furnace for our balls. Cry for the homosexual, cry! cry! Oh shit we've got to stop this gay thing, this dragging fags through the coals thing, this pope shit in the woods or we're giving the whiney heavy metal bands of the future more to whine about, come on - whine! whine!

Everyone have kids. I should have children, two, three, nine, eighty-eleven and more so they can die fighting over the last fossil fuel deposits on earth and then later for trees and water and soil and good drugs, bad drugs, original pressing Led Zeppelin vinyl - all the wonderful necessities of life will become scarce. Todos somos isle–os de pascua. Palm jungles into deserts.

I'm working on getting the giant head erect, the giant head with long ears atop a stunted torso. 35 tons of head to erect, and when it was all over and the Easter islanders knew their gods failed them and their privileged elite blew the tropical paradise, squandered their lives and resources leaving them to cannibalism - the heads toppled, the erections fell and they carved in symbols of their new religion on the fallen idols: cunt lips and birdmen. Cunts etched into the mighty heads; no longer standing tall and proud, but now knocked down and broken. The Easter Island heads started out stubby, squat, but as time went on they carved them to be longer, more slender, phallic, and it all ended with the giant penile monuments to chieftains and priests felled and branded with pussies.

We will all fall and be branded with pussies.

Christ on the cross with a gaping hole scored into the chest. Menstrual blood flowing down the temple walls and drip, drip, drip onto the Torah scroll. The Quran torn apart page by page and folded into thousands of origami vaginas, and gay men will wear them around their engorged cocks as ceremonial wedding bands and as a sacrament during anal intercourse. I say this unto you, and behold! Behold again! What I do not know - just behold, beholden bastards, behold! For it is true. And if not true, then just wait for the sign to help you through these troubling times.

O, the times. O, the trouble. The big, big Trub-down.

We carefully meander our way from scandal to scandal: leaking, yellowcaking, exposing, hiding behind lies and reverse engineering events. Turn the criminal into the hero and the victim into Hitler - or Hitler's second cousin - or the descendants of Hitler's cats - something, anything to do with Hitler. There is no end to the treacheries that cover up treacheries, to the lies obscuring greater lies. The enormity of the lies now must be reaching an apex. Soon everyone will lie, freely, lie detectors will detect only a steady blip of righteousness and will be replaced by Patriot detectors.

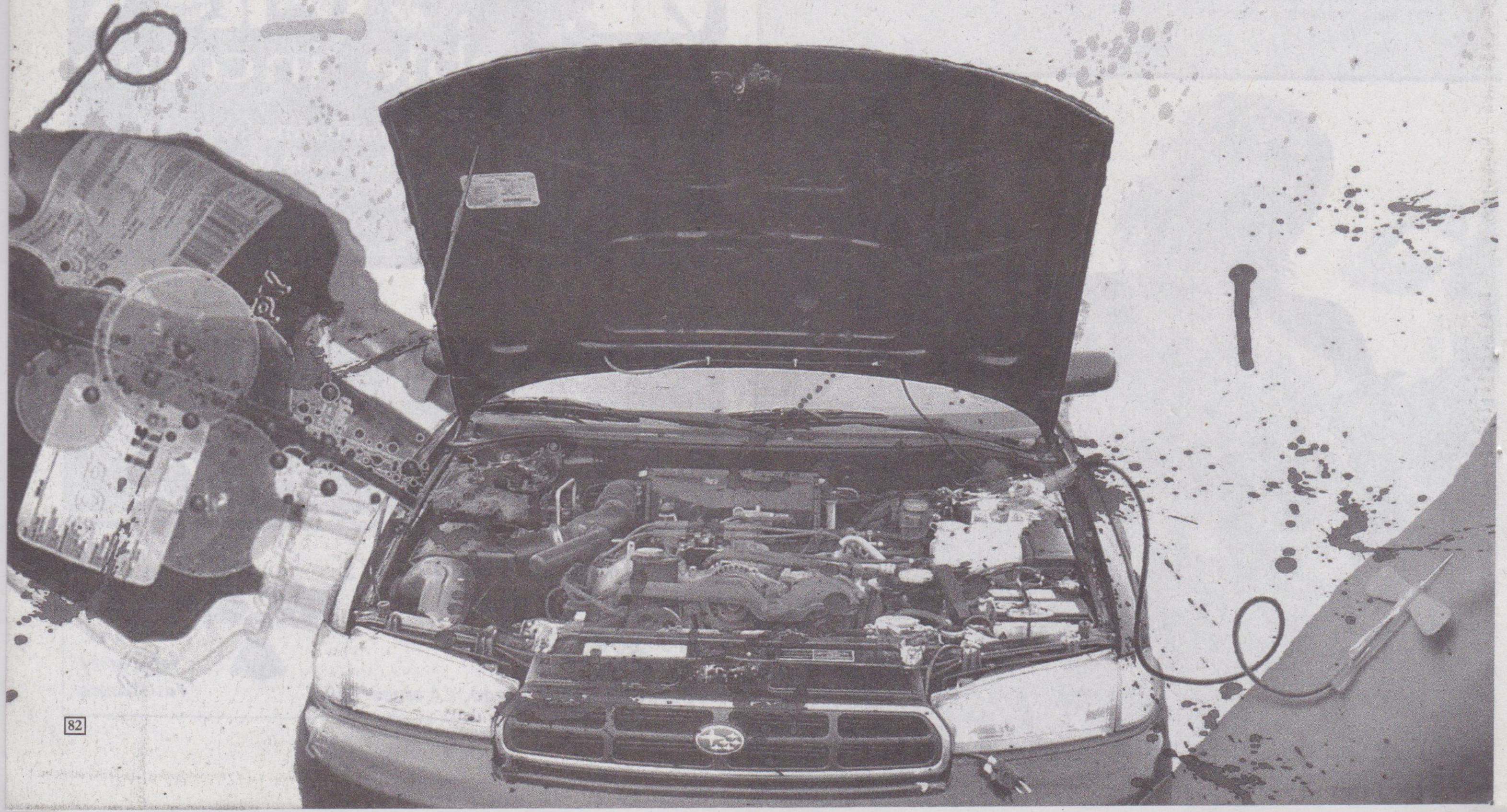
"Do you love your country?" "Do you believe in God?" "Do you support our troops?" "Will you administer the presidential lube to the asses of the masses?" Yes, yes, yes, and double fucking YES!

Everyone marching towards the red white and blue at the end of the tunnel. Red. Blood. Will blood never be as valuable as oil? I see a car with an IV tube to the gas tank. You turn the key, jack your vein and the car takes on a slow trickle of your blood to run. Miles per gallon takes on a new meaning. As does blood drive.

Every drive is a blood drive, tracks of blood across the third world. How far are you willing to go for your summer drive? Out for a blood drive. Hook up the wife, hook up the daughter, you'll drive further than ever. We'll pick up some Mexicans at the Home Depot, jack 'em into the blood tank and slip 'em some green for a little red. A nation of vampiric automobiles. A nation hungry for that bubblin' hemoglobin crude. Suck, suck, suck. The white, cold corpses, the starving and the sick and the weak, littering the roadsides from giving too much of the crimson crude. The truck stop whores are a thing of the past. They're pussies ain't worth as much as what they got all hidden seductively away in those veins. Menstruating whores go for the big hook up. Used tampons are treasures to be wrung dry. The dead are a given, pumped dry like the oil wells of yore, but we don't have time for crying or mourning because this is progress!

Now get those stinking flag draped coffins off the TV! The blue, the dirty deep blues come along when there is no blood left to be had, after the third world's exploding population problem has ended, after their world has been sucked dry of blood and human life; Middle Eastern blood purchased for dimes on the dollar.

It was great while it lasted, but now it's all gone.



# God or something like it

**by Aaron Gudmunson**

Aren't jokes supposed to be funny? This has got to be a joke or something. But it isn't. I'm not laughing. I can't make sense of it yet. No one told me this is how life would be. You're just supposed to play it by ear, I guess. Learn as you go. Which is what I'm trying to do. Let me explain. Bear with me.

Try this out. My neighbor, Mrs. Shaddle, has only 593 breaths left in her body before expiration. Make that 592. I've been waiting by the phone for the past fifteen minutes waiting for her to die. Then I'll call 911 and be done with it. Poor Mrs. Shaddle. She's such a nice woman. Makes a mean snickerdoodle.

***566.***

Did you know that no one in this city lost their virginity today? I'll go one better than that. For three minutes and twenty-six seconds of the past 24 hours, no one in this city was having sex. Yeah. For the other 99.9% of the day, forget about it. But for those quick, dying seconds, this was a sexless city.

Another example: there were 55 parole violation warrants issued on excons in this state alone today. Recidivism is alive and well and living in Illinois. Fifty-five offenders are going back to get beaten behind bars for violating parole sanctions.

***377.***

I know these things. These trivial, unknowable truths are as plain to me as the nose on my face. The nose that's peppered with exactly 1,134 pores the size of pinheads. My nose that's been attached to my face all my life and that I now know more about than I ever wanted to.

You see, I have a theory. Don't laugh, but suddenly I'm sure of it. I'm becoming God, or something like It.

In case you hadn't heard, there's a vacancy upstairs. Why else should I be custodian of all this useless knowledge?

***298.***

Here's another one to tickle your funny bone. The kid that lives below me, Mikey Something, dresses in his sister's underwear when she's away at college. He's fourteen. He videotaped himself dancing in front of a mirror. There's nothing sexual or incestuous about it; he just likes the way he looks in lace.

I'm not sure why this has fallen into my lap. But it has. Today alone 111,488 mosquito larvae hatched in stagnant puddles out past the park. Of those, 22,624 lived. Today alone, four car accidents occurred on Lincoln Avenue. Of those, three resulted in injury and one fatality, a toddler. Her parents are devastated. The mother will become an alcoholic and the father will attempt suicide and in failing, be committed to a psychiatric hospital for six months. He was driving.

***217.***

I could explain to you the methodology of time travel and how its advent was discovered in the late 1600s by a little-known German alchemist who went mad and destroyed his research following a brief jaunt to the 21st Century. I could tell you that invisibility is a real phenomenon and that a select few people and animals employ it on a regular basis. I could tell you that vampires and ghosts do exist, just not in the forms that you imagine. Oh yes, and werewolves.

I could tell you the square root of 4,592,821,013 out to infinite decimal places. That goes for any real number. I could tell you the cure for cancer. But hell, pretty much any cancer research facility could.

I could tell you there is no solution for world peace. That people are just too different. But then you already know that, don't you?

Suddenly awareness takes on a whole new meaning. Knowledge may be power, but it's also hell.

I can tell you how you will die. I know your birth, your life. I know your death. Don't worry, I won't spoil it for you. It won't be bad, I promise. It's fast and painless, like clipping a hangnail. One minute there, snip, then gone.

But I don't know how I'll die. That's the one thing I cannot see.

***172.***

Suddenly I'm scared. I have a feeling that death is something I'll never have the luxury of experiencing. Because no matter how hard I concentrate on this new power appointed by Whomever, my death is the one thing I cannot know.

Unlike poor Mrs. Shaddle. In a minute, you'll have to excuse me. I'll have a phone call to make. 100 breaths remaining and then game over.

Last thing. Remember this, above all else: I'm watching out for you. I cannot promise I'll come to help when you call for it. I cannot promise I'll find your car keys. I certainly can't promise you the winning lottery numbers (although if you decide to play next month, avoid odd digits). What I can tell you is that I'm here. I'm watching. And I'm learning. Because to become God, you have a lot to learn and there's not one damn thing funny about it.

Good-bye, Mrs. Shaddle.

**by Paul Richter**

Yes, this really is a review of a game that was released in July. I've spent the last few months carefully playing, err, testing this FPS war title. Lots and lots of testing. So many hours, in fact, that this reviewer's heroin-sized addiction to Counter-Strike has not only subsided, but disappeared all together. Six years of gaming, thousands and thousands of hours of game play, stopped cold. And why? Battlefield 2 is currently the single best FPS you can play on the PC, period. Talk all you want about the rest, but that's what they are; paltry shambles of code stitched together for mediocre game play and pointy polygons. You can stop and just go buy this game, or read on.

Battlefield 2 (BF2) starts off where its predecessor, Battlefield 1942, left off. Actually, Battlefield Vietnam was after BF1942, but that title wasn't nearly as popular (or good). While a single player mode is included, BF2 is all about multi-player combat, huge (up to) 64 person wars that take 5 to 25 minutes (or more!) to finish. The era set in BF2 is modern, and skirmishes are between two of the following countries; American, Chinese or the Middle East Coalition. All of the hand combat weapons are here, including tanks, helicopters and jets. As a player, you can be one of six different types of soldier (medic, sniper, engineer, etc), and each has a unique roll in game play. Once on a server, you can wander alone, Mad Max style, or team up with six other teammates in squads. Or, for the dorky RTS inside you, each side has a single position of commander, which takes a top-down view at the entire map and directs troops, supplies and air strikes at will.

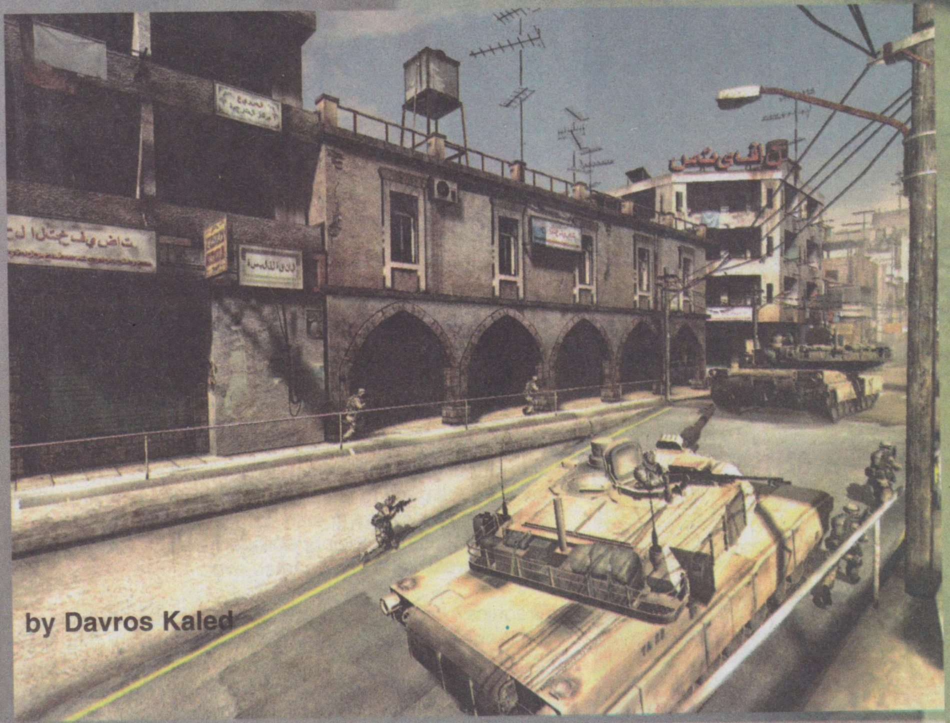
Overall, the game play, team play and global stats (and awards / medals, which are given during play and after) as well as the graphics, make this one awesome FPS.

The graphics, you ask? Oh, they are excellent and top of the line, but be prepared to upgrade your PC. See this background? While that is an actual screenshot of battle (like the others), that only looks that nice on a high end PC with a $250+ graphics card. Mine cost $125. Sigh.

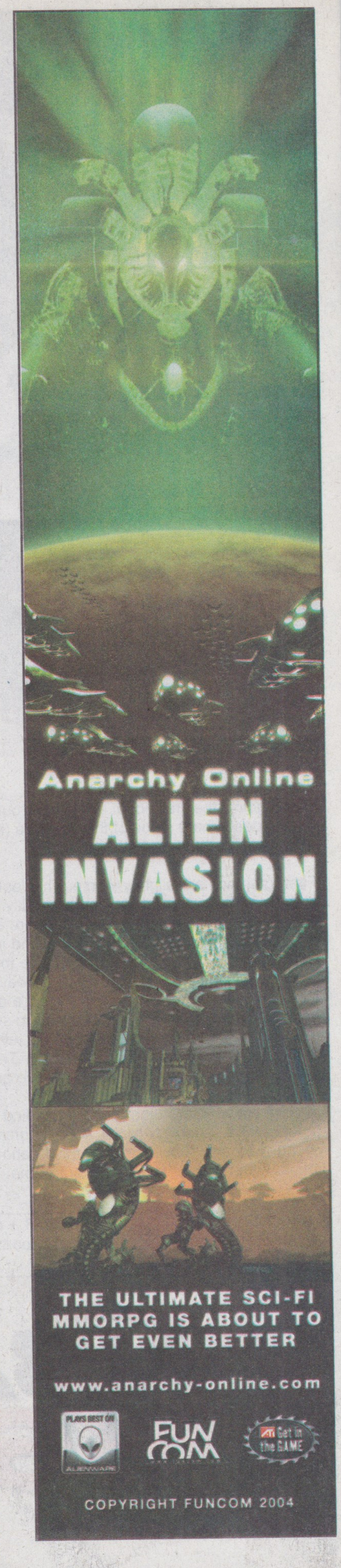
# BATTLEFIELD 2

**Platform:** PC
**Developer:** Digital Illusions
**Publisher:** Electronic Arts
**Players:** 1 + Online Multiplayer
**Web:** eagames.com

by Davros Kaled



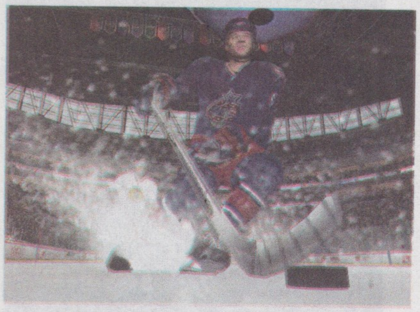
**Above:** An in-game shot of troops in formation. Roofs above are susceptible to snipers and enemy soldiers wielding armor-piercing weapons. **Below, counter-clockwise:** The viewpoint from a commander. Firing a missile from an attack helicopter at an approaching boat, fish-in-barrel style. Tanks will demolish just about everything. One sniper about to finish off another.



# NHL 2K6

| | |
|---|---|
| **Platform:** PS2/XBox | **Players:** 1 + online |
| **Developer:** Visual Concepts | **Web:** 2ksports.com |
| **Publisher:** 2K Sports | |

Anybody who has ever dumped massive amounts of time into hockey videogames, from anything like EA NHL '96 on the Genesis to Blades of Steel on the Playstation, knows that good hockey games are hard to find. I haven't been on the gaming ice since 2000, so it was interesting to be able to sit down with something five years later. And the results? Amazing, definitely on par as one of the most impressive hockey games ever.



Graphics? Look to the left. See that hit? Looks twice as good on the actual screen, even better at 480i. The line distinguishing between an actual game and a videogame is still very present, but blurring more and more. Between the graphics and sound (crowd, sticks and the like) this game is even great to watch others play. The AI is pretty tight, though you can still spot patterns in the computer's play choices and offense. Games like this are really built for multiplayer, and NHL2K6 is a great tool to use in shaming my gaming friends. Overall, this title performs very well, especially when you include that it's only $19.99 and, of course, it won't ever go on strike. **PR**

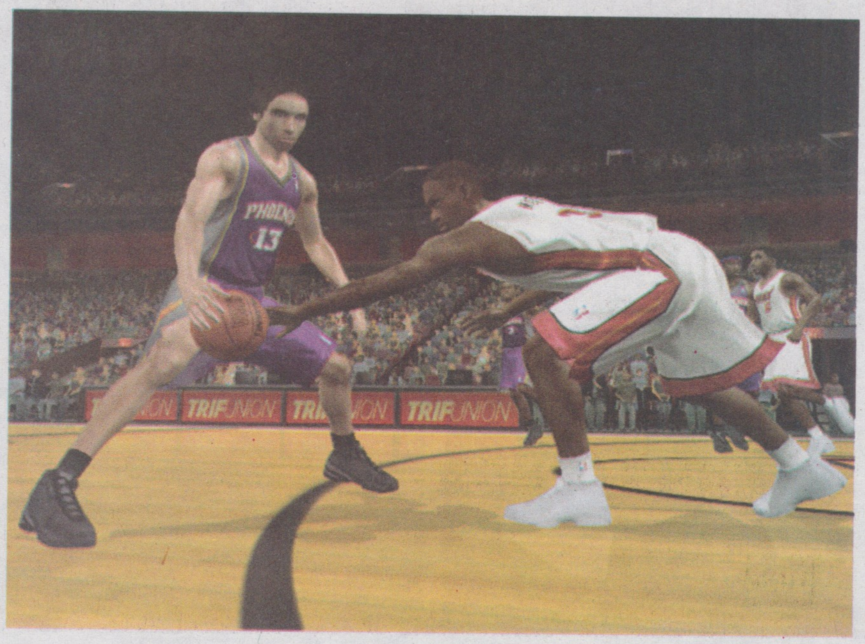
While going the traditional basketball outlets, NBA2K6 does indeed share some of the positives (and negatives) of its younger brother, NHL2K6.

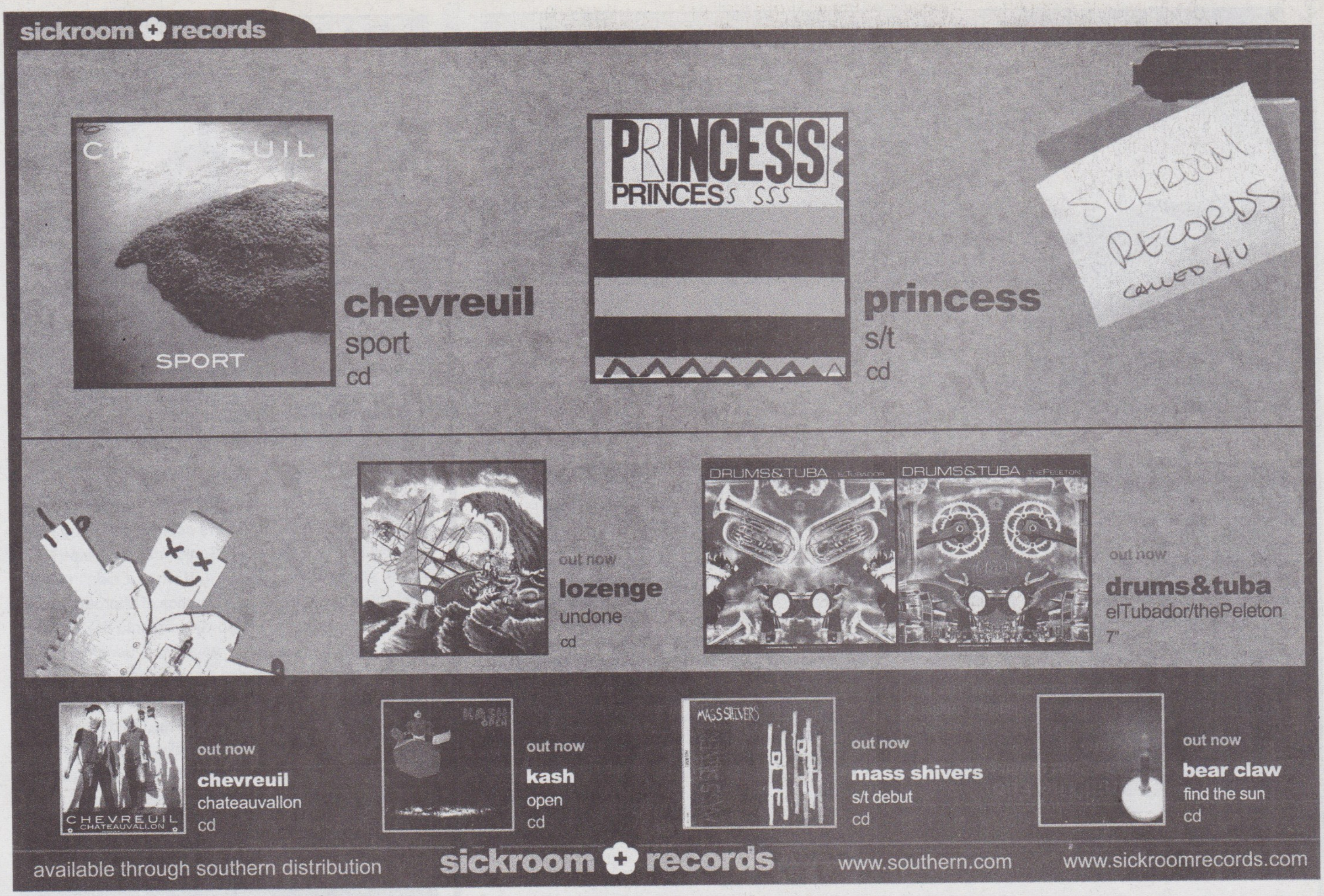
First, graphics are slightly worse. This looks more like a first gen XBox title. I'm not sure exactly why NHL2K6 looks better, but it does. That aside, there are some pretty cool bonuses that aren't usually found in sports titles. The standard career mode that can be found in almost any sports game is here, but with a heavy adjustment. Now called 24/7, you can literally build a character from scratch. Everything from looks (tattoos to sweatbands) to skill improvement in streetball games, eventually competing in competitions (like the EBC). This is a pretty refreshing change an otherwise yawning game mode.

In competition later in the game, you'll find that the computer can be especially brutal when it comes to defense. Prepare to say "oh, what the fuck!" about ten million times. Other wise, this is a decent game, especially for the $19.99 price tag. **PR**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Platform:** XBox | **Players:** 1 + online |
| **Developer:** 2K Sports | **Web:** 2ksports.com |
| **Publisher:** 2K Sports | |

# NBA 2K6







# FRANTIC MANTIS

## DATA IS NOT INFORMATION

lujo035

With Frantic Mantis, Shelby Cinca (Frodus) and cohorts Per Stålberg and Håkan Johansson (Division Of Laura Lee) create their own brand of future-perfect punk rock. They'll incite riotous hardcore that harks back to the DC days of yore on one song, and then turn around and show you a post-apocalyptic electronic dreamscape with the next. - Bornbackwards.com

# HISTORY INVADES

## THE STRUCTURE OF A PRECISE FASHION

lujo026

Ten songs of intense, pure passion. Guitar and bass tones and sounds that are not of this world with an edge that is not easy to match. Artistry that surpasses most other artists of their generation. This young band hailing from Seattle, Washington teamed up with Jason Martin of Starflyer 59 to capture a very prolific, epic release in this band's career. We will be hearing alot more for this band in the coming years. They must not be forgotten!

# SILENCE THE FOE

## SWEET SWEET SUICIDE

lujo036

Silence The Foe bring to mind the most challenging moments of Refused, Frodus(whose singer Shelby Cinca makes a guest appearance on the disc), Converge, and even My Bloody Valentine! Creating a unique blend of hardcore and atmosphere that is equally jarring, melancholy, and inspiring. The American release of "Sweet Sweet Suicide" on Lujo contains 2 bonus tracks and their two heavily spun (award winning) music videos. This is the sound of hardcore in 2005.. the shape of punk that has come and evolved into a juggernaut that leaves thrashed vocal chords, destroyed guitars, and pummeled fans in it's path.

# SUFFERING & THE HIDEOUS THIEVES

## ASHAMED

lujo032

"Ashamed" is the Thieves' most eclectic and complete release to date. Written as a full band for the first time ever, this album explores a darker side of S&THT that stems from Jeff Bettger's previous music endeavors - Raft of Dead Monkeys, Ninety Pound Wuss. In light of this darker exploration, they also take a dive into gentler more pop oriented song writing. This album pulls out all of the stops and allows the band to experiment with sounds both vocally and instrumentally. Recorded at two different studios, the band captures the "rawness" of the darker songs and the beauty of the lighter songs. An amazing chapter in this band's lifetime.

# IN PRAISE OF FOLLY

## MEANS/ENDS

lujo029

The sophomore release from Seattle's In Praise of Folly can be seen as a departure from their first record. The beautiful and haunting vocals are still there along with the layers of atmospheric guitars, but the songs are shorter, more mature, and rock much harder then any of their earlier work. With this album In Praise of Folly may still draw comparisons to indie-rock bands such as Built to Spill and Modest Mouse, but "means/ends" sees them delving deeper into classical music and math rock influences.

lujo

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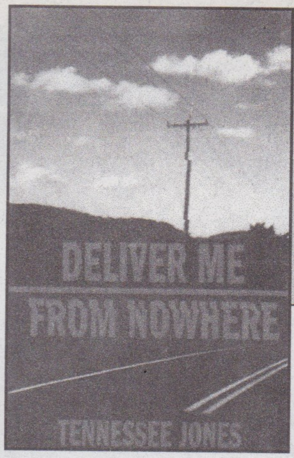



## Tennessee Jones
***"Deliver Me From Nowhere"***
**(Soft Skull)**

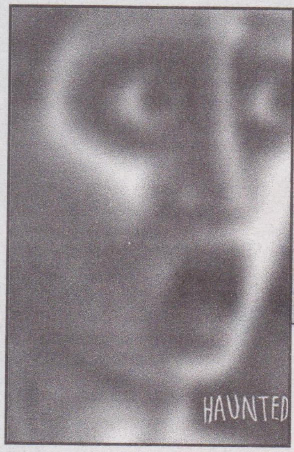
In "Nowhere", Jones takes The Boss' deadbeat and downtrodden characters and fleshes them out, spinning stories of violence, depravity and (on occasion) hope. There is a certain bleakness to Jones' writing; short, clipped dialogue interspersed with taboo imagery and tobacco stained thoughts. The majority of the characters are dead or dying, suicidal or homicidal, and nearly all live in a parallel universe full of broken relationships and unfulfilled dreams. An interesting read.
www.softskull.com

**Brian Greenaway**

## J. Dee Hill and Phil Hollenbeck
***"Freaks and Fire: The Underground Reinvention of Circus"***
**(Soft Skull)**

This should be required reading for every kid in third grade. I dreamt of joining the circus, but if these were the requirements I would have gladly stuck to multiplication tables and books about heroic dogs. "Freaks and Fire" chronicles 10 underground circuses as they travel across the country performing on homemade stages that fold out of their trailer beds. It is a large-scale circus on a DIY budget, without the elephants. Enigma talks about his quest to cover his body in a jigsaw puzzle tattoo and how he keeps his act fresh when he performs back-to-back three times a night for the Bros.Grim Sideshows. Zamora the Torture King talks about scar tissue in his cheeks from pushing steel pins through them and how he forked his own tongue. Not for the nervous stomach, but definitely for anyone who ever wanted to join the circus (which is everyone).
www.softskull.com

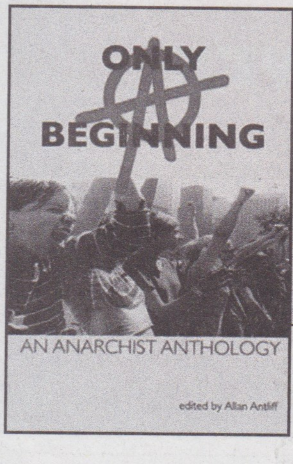
**Peter Soyer**




## Chuck Palahniuk
***"Haunted"***
**(Doubleday)**

Gruesome? You don't know the meaning until you've read the new novel by the author of Fight Club. Take twenty writers who register for a retreat to create their "masterpieces" and lock them away for three months. Deprive them of food, electricity, and running water to help inspire them. Add horror stories told by the participants and you've got one twisted-ass yarn. If you can sit through "Guts" straight-faced, you're stronger than I. But despite the subject matter (or because of it), Palahniuk gets his satiric message out: people are in love with their suffering and will do anything to gain immortality, even resort to self-mutilation and cannibalism. Read at your own risk; you may just laugh your guts out.
www.doubleday.com

**Aaron Gudmunson**




## Allan Antliff (Editor)
***"Only A Beginning: An Anarchist Anthology"***
**(Arsenal Pulp Press)**

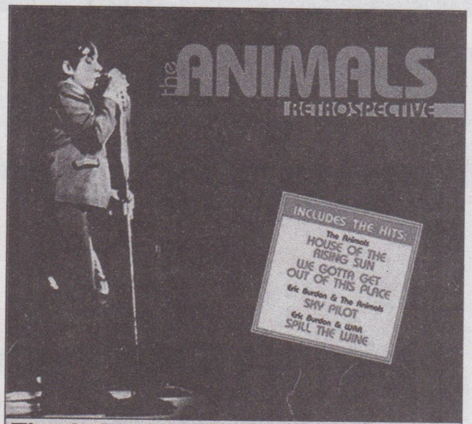
This is coffee table literature at it's finest . This anthology of the anarchist movement in Canada from the 70s through the present offers hundreds of actual articles representing a large portion of anarchist media and arts. Presented through a selection of indie political articles, an immortalized snapshot of the passionate, highly intelligent yet often idealistic mood of anarchism in North America is offered. Covering art, pottery, theatre and music as well as political journalism from the viewpoint of grassroots collectives, a thorough and accurate representation of anarchist culture is created.
www.arsenalpulp.com

**Rondi Collins**

## Sonic Youth
***"Goo – Deluxe Edition"***
**(Geffen)**

Fifteen years ago in 1990 – just one year before Nirvana would break onto the scene and change the musical landscape forever; Sonic Youth released their eighth studio album, "Goo." And while it didn't necessarily blow away the fans and critics of alternative rock music at the time, "Goo" slowly crept into the subconscious of America's jaded youth and became a cult favorite during the nineties. Now reissued as a two disc affair, "Goo – Deluxe Edition" offers up several b-sides, 8-track demos of the songs, and previously unreleased material that didn't make the final cut. This CD is a must have for fans of Chuck D, Byron Coley and the unyielding desire to wear flannel shirts.
www.geffen.com

**Gordon Downs**




## The Animals
***"Retrospective"***
**(ABKCO)**

The 1960's were without a doubt the most influential decade in American pop music. With the British invasion happening, there seemed to be a slew of bands that came across the pond and devoured the minds and hearts of young American girls and boys. The Animals were a great band, though due to their blue collar sound and somewhat unpolished looks they didn't reach their maximum potential as one of the most rocking and soulful bands to have influenced an entire generation of kids who were looking for something left of the dial. Twenty two songs in all, this Animals "Retrospective" supplies not only the classic hits for devout fans, but also some great songs that seemed to be overshadowed by "The House Of The Rising Sun."
www.abkco.com

**Gordon Downs**

# TOP5'S | 5UGGESTION5 FROM THE MF MU5IC 5TAFF.

## Gordon Downs

Broadcast "Tender Buttons" (Warp)
*- Finally some fucking Tender Buttons!*
The Who "Live At Leeds" (MCA)
*- Quick One While He's Away*
Guapo "Black Oni" (Ipecac)
*- Drugs, drugs and more drugs!*
The Go! Team "Thunder, Lightning, Strike" (Memphis Industries)
*- Who the fuck is singing?*
Early Man "Closing In" (Matador)
*- Bring back motherfucking Yngvie Malmstein!*

## Cosmo Lee

Ezekiel Honig & Morgan Packard "Early Morning Migration" (Microcosm)
*- The perfect everyday ambient soundtrack.*
Stewart Walker "Grounded in Existence" (Persona)
*- Cool, yet propulsive minimal electronics.*
Yob "The Unreal Never Lived" (Metal Blade)
*- Throw the goat, do yoga.*
Opeth "Ghost Reveries" (Roadrunner)
*- Prog rock without the bell-bottoms.*
Animosity "Empires" (Blackmarket Activities)
*- 19 year-olds kick your ass.*

## Tyson

Sonic Sum "Plasterman" (SkyPimps)
*- EP of the new millennium.*
Why? "Elephant Eyelash" (Anticon)
*- Something melodic for those heads.*
Sound Tribe Sector 9 "Artifact" (System)
*- 5 man downtempo done perfectly*
Black Mountain "Self Titled" (JagJaguwar)
*- Fresh, Psychadelic B.C. rock geniuses*
Edan "Beauty and the Beat" (Lewis Recordings)
*- Creativity has never hurt anybody.*

## Jason Schruers

Against Me! "Searching for a Former Clarity" (Fat)
*- Amazing next chapter, punk's savior!*
Propagandhi "Potemkin City Limits" (G7 Welcoming Committee/Fat)
*- Well worth the long wait.*
Curl Up and Die "The One Above All, The End of All That Is" (Revelation)
*- The only metalcore band that matters.*
Modern Life Is War "Witness" (Deathwish Inc.)
*- Hardcore, still kicking ass strong.*
Cave In "Perfect Pitch Black" (Hydra Head)
*- Blows Jupiter away. Very serious.*

## Eric Alexy

7 angels 7 plagues "Jhazmyne's Lullaby" (Uprising)
*- Here's an oxymoron: good hardcore*
Eisly "Room Noises" (Record Collection)
*- Recalls Mazzy Star, from afar*
Keith Caputo "Died Laughing" (Roadrunner UK)
*- LOA frontman's overlooked solo outting*
The Comsat Angels "Waiting for a Miracle" (Polydor)
*- Like Joy Division, but better*
Pitty Sing "Pitty Sing" (Or Music)
*- We've found INXS' new singer*

## Kevin Satterwhite

Iron & Wine "The Creek Drank The Cradle" (Sup Pop)
*- A definitive lo-fi folk release.*
The Black Keys "Rubber Factory" (Fat Possum)
*- Blues from Ohio white guys.*
Super Furry Animals "Rings Around The World (w/ Bonus Disc)" (XI / Beggars Us Ada)
*- A psychedelic, pop, drug trip.*
The Folk Implosion "One Part Lullaby" (Interscope)
*- Non-folk release from Lou Barlow.*
Okkervil River "Black Sheep Boy" (Jagjaguwar)
*- Dark folk rock from Texas.*

## Chad Bowar

Watch Them Die "Bastard Son" (Century Media)
*- Nonstop intensity beginning to end.*
No Use For A Name "Keep Them Confused" (Fat Wreck Chords)
*- Skate punk vets keep rolling.*
Opeth "Ghost Reveries" (Roadrunner)
*- Unbelievably diverse musically and vocally.*
Go Betty Go "Nothing Is More" (Side One Dummy)
*- California punk chicks kick ass.*
Beecher "This Elegy, His Autopsy" (Eulogy)
*- Mathcore band willing to experiment.*

## Thomas Shulte

Faust "Impressions" (Hit Thing)
*- Krautrock headspace for head phones.*
Robert Walter "Super Heavy Organ" (Magan Carta)
*- Fun, funky, and swinging disc.*
Dr. Israel "Inna City Pressure" (ROIR)
*- Dub science straight outta Brooklyn.*
Tony Levin "Prime Cuts" (Magna Carta)
*- King Crimson bassist in series.*
Misfits meet The Nutley Brass "Fiend Club Lounge" (Rykodisc/Misfits Records)
*- Misfits songs done as swing.*

## Justin Wittenmeier

Anata "The Infernal Depths Of Hatred" (Season Of Mist)
*- Swedish death metal. 'nuff said.*
Darkside "Cognitive Dissonance" (Season Of Mist)
*- Amazingly well written death metal.*
Every Time I Die "Gutter Phenomenon" (Ferret)
*- Raunchy metal with punk influence.*
Fear Factory "Transgression" (Calvin)
*- Band finally matures. Hmmm, meaty.*
Heaven Shall Burn "Asunder" (Lifeforce)
*- Bolt Thrower influenced German metal.*

## Barry Dejasu

Opeth "Ghost Reveries" (Roadrunner)
*- Easily their best album yet.*
Ulver "Themes From William Blake's The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" (Jester)
*- Electronica? Formerly black metal? Excellent!*
Dream Theater "Octavarium" (Atlantic)
*- Their best in recent years.*
Nevermore "This Godless Endeavor" (Century Media)
*- Perfection, love it or suck.*
Meshuggah "Catch Thirtythr33" (Nuclear Blast)
*- How can I even begin?*

## Bushman

Call Me Lightening "The Trouble We're In" (Revelation)
*- Yeah, I'm a young professional*
!!! "Louden Up Now" (Touch and Go)
*- You Can Tell The President...*
Cave In "Perfect Pitch Black" (HydraHead)
*- Evolved back into meaty music*
Meshuggah "CatchThirtythr33" (Nuclear Blast)
*- Sucker for above average pop*
Soundgarden "Badmotorfinger" (A&M)
*- in my Jesus Christ Pose*

## Dailyn Brown

Sufjan Stevens "Come On Feel The Illinoise" (Asthmatic Kitty)
*- History lessons for your headphones.*
31 Knots "It as High Time to Escape" (Fight)
*- Quirky but creative complex rhythms.*
Goblin Cock "Bagged and Boarded" (Absolutely Kosher)
*- Metal for Rob Crow fans.*
Devendra Banhart "Niño Rojo" (Young God)
*- Bedtime stories for folksy grownups.*
Cursive "The Difference Between Houses and Homes" (Saddle Creek)
*- Old shit, new album title.*

## Melvin Gaye

9th Wonder & Buckshot "Chemistry" (Duck Down)
*- The BDI Thug is back!*
Kanye West "Late Registration" (Roc A Fella)
*- Incredibly overrated, but sonically superior.*
Greenhouse Effect "Columbus Or Bust" (Raptivism)
*- Blueprint and Manifest craft bangers.*
General Elektriks "Cliquety Kliqk" (Quannum)
*- The brilliance of RV Salters.*
Edan "Beauty & The Beat" (Lewis Entertainment)
*- Psychedelia and rap collide beautifully.*

## Nick Muhlestein

Nile "Annihilation of the Wicked" (Relapse)
*- Raw, brutal, epic death metal.*
Opeth "Ghost Reveries" (Roadrunner)
*- Best Opeth yet.*
Atheist "Unquestionable Presence" (Relapse)
*- Wild, innovative death-jazz.*
Vio-Lence "Eternal Nightmare" (Megaforce)
*- Devastating but catchy thrash.*
3 Inches of Blood "Advance and Vanguish" (Roadrunner)
*- Over the top classic metal.*

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SCREAM & SHOUT
IN STORES NOW
CORETTA SCOTT
SCREAM & SHOUT
Coretta Scott brings classic rock/metal riffs ala Motley Crue and Guns 'n Roses, and meshes them perfectly with the modern sounds of today's alternative bands like Taking Back Sunday, Saosin and My Chemical Romance.
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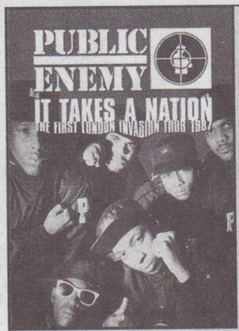
New York's new face of rock! LBT belts out a record that will leave you speechless. For fans of Coheed & Cambria and My Chemical Romance.

DVD

## Various Artists
***"Basement T.V. Vol. 1"***
**(BASEMENT)**

Basement T.V. Volume 1 is a compilation of performances from a variety of underground hip hop artists spanning the last five years. Everything on this video is performed live, songs from shows or performances from record stores. They even throw in a few rhyme battles. The live show videos are altered artistically to enhance the experience, while the store and battle performances are usually left untouched. The list of artists featured is massive; a number of big, underground acts such as Aceyalone, Aesop Rock, Slug, Eyedea & Abilities, J-Live, MF Doom, Mr. Lif, Brother Ali, Murs and Blueprint are present. It even features a short video of Sage Francis walking wearing an American Flag for a cape.
www.basementhiphop.com

**Kevin Satterwhite**




## Public Enemy
***"It Takes a Nation: The First London Invasion Tour, 1987"***
**(SLAMMEDIA)**

Few groups in 1987 other than Public Enemy can tell a London audience, "Everybody who likes the prime minister, be quiet!" and receive a more potent response. I seriously cannot stress enough how much Public Enemy owned this concert. They had a massive London crowd in the palm of their raised power fists song for song during a performance equivalent to the big stage, light show extravaganza of the few large hip-hop tours in recent years (think: Anger Management, Up In Smoke). White-sweatsuited MCs Chuck D. and Flava Flav jam hits like "Bring the Noise" and "Public Enemy #1" and bring the crowd to a frenzy with plenty of call-and-response activist preaching between songs. Additional behind the scenes commentaries, photo gallery, and extra live video from an Australian concert are worth checking out.
www.mvd.com

**Campbell**

## G-Unit
***"Groupie Love"***
**(DIGITAL SIN)**

Perhaps you've heard of this much talked about adult DVD release by the infamous rap crew the G-Unit? Well it's fucking porno! Big fucking surprise right. Only thing is, this XXX DVD is fairly unique. It's filmed entirely POV (point of view) and you have the option of choosing either a "naughty" or "nice" girl who will either give you a blowjob, let you do her doggystyle or copulate with her sideways or something kinky like that. I'm not sure if this feature is a first for XXX DVD's, but there's a "Cum on Cue" icon that when selected will automatically jump to a scene with some dude creaming all over some "groupie's" face. What struck me as strange though, was that despite all the members of G-Unit being of African-American descent; the motherfucking dude fucking all the porn stars was some white dude! What's up with that Llyod? Couldn't you get Mr. Marcus or something? Starring over 17 lovely starlets, "Groupie Love" is above all a collector's item for the G-Unit's high school fan base.
www.digitalsindvd.com

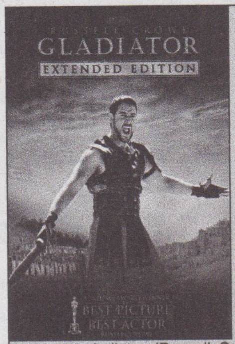
**Gordon Downs**

FILM/TV

## Office Space
***"Special Edition"***
**(FOX HOME ENT.)**

Damn it feels good to be a gangsta. Legendary words by the infamous Geto Boys, a group notorious for their generally psychotic and violent raps. Office Space is notorious as well, but for slightly different reasons. Anybody who has ever had the displeasure of working in a cubicle can and will immediately relate to about 70% of this film, hands down. Christian, atheist, fat, skinny... no matter who you are, as an office worker, you'll identify with the film more then you'd proabably want. For those somehow unfamiliar, this comedy follows Peter Gibbons (played by Ron Livingston) as he stumbles aimlessly around his life, from girlfriends to jobs (usually the latter). This DVD includes deleted scenes and a retrospective with Mike Judge, the films creator.
www.foxhome.com

**Paul Richter**




## Gladiator
**"Extended Edition"**
**(DREAMWORKS)**

It was always assumed that the aged epic *Spartacus* would be topped, but who could have predicted that Ridley Scott, director of *Blade Runner* (and *Thelma And Louise*!), would be the one to take down Kirk Douglas. Yet he did, amazing audiences globally with his epic film about a gladiator (Russell Crowe) making his way thru Rome. It's violent, beautifully cinematic and just a bit long, but an awesome film nonetheless. For fans of the film, this is the DVD to buy, as it includes *Gladiator* in widescreen (and 17 minutes longer), as well as deleted scenes, making of and a slew of other stuff (three DVDs included!).

**Paul Richter**

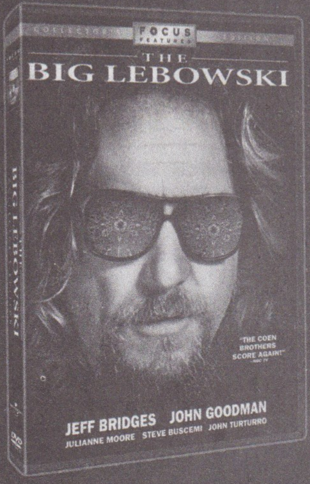
ANIME

## Sealab 2021
***"Season 3"***
**(ADULT SWIM)**

It's only been gone for a few months and I already miss this amazing cartoon. Sealab 2021 is, err, was just another one of the hilarious cartoons that play into the wee hours on Cartoon Network's grown-up time slot, otherwise known as Adult Swim. The show itself uses cleaned up footage from the old school Hanna Barbera cartoon, Sealab 2020, which originally aired in 1972. Sealab 2021, however, only resembles the original if you've got the television on mute. Turn up the volume and find that the geniuses behind the show have completely turned the Sealab world upside down. Characters murder each other, do drugs, show their tits, max out credit cards... it's fucking nuts. Each cartoon is less then 14 minutes in total, so the jokes are quick and the animation only slightly blurry. For fans of this show, the Season 3 DVD composes (aside from the obvious) the Gern Pilot (the original cartoon that was used for the 'pitch' to Adult Swim), audio commentary and some other small random bits. Oh, and an unaired episode which was never really finished in the first place, so to qualify as an unaired episode, I would say nay. Overall, this DVD is a healthy addition to your cartoon fix.
www.adultswim.com

**Paul Richter**

**This is not 'Nam, this is bowling! There are rules!**
**- Walter Sobchak**




**On DVD October 18th**

**A special DVD version of The Big Lebowski is coming, digitally remastered and filled with tons of bonus features. Want a free copy? We'll pick five of the worst The Big Lebowski drawings we receive (address below). Artwork must be received by 10/25. Good luck, dude.**

**Send bad art to:**
**Modern Fix Lebowski**
**3368 Governor Drive Suite 318F**
**San Diego, CA 92122**

## Behemoth
***"Demigod"***
**(Olympic)**

Compared to the bands previous works, this sounds a hell of a lot more musical, but doesn't give an inch on the brutality front. This is extremely fast, powerful and deathly stuff. They're giving me what I like and what I like is a little beauty, something pretty, a delight to the ears amidst the unmitigated musical aggression and Behemoth do it, incorporating flashes of melody and je ne se qua. The vocals are your standard death metal type vocals, but if you like the genre, I can't imagine a thing like that would distract you from the superior quality of Behemoth's music compared to the other dime-a-dozen bands playing glutting the scene. Guitar solos play on under the vocals, the drums constantly out do themselves and no song or riff overstays its welcome. As far as death metal goes, where do you think you're going to get any better? This is it, man. This is what 2005 has to offer, and I'm taking it with a smile.
www.olympicrecordings.com
DICK

## Cephalic Carnage
***"Anomalies"***
**(Relapse)**

Colorado's Cephalic Carnage presents the world with another devastating onslaught of hyper-technical, jazz-inflected death-grind. This album is more cohesive and conventionally metallic than its ultra-weird predecessor, "Lucid Interval", but Cephalic Carnage still display atypical creativity and diversity for a death-grind band as they work in jazzy atmospherics, stoner grooves, choppy start-stop riffing and occasional bits of metalcore and melo-death influence along with some of the strangest lyrics. Those who like their extreme metal with a bit of weirdness on the side ought to find a lot to enjoy here.
www.cephaliccarnage.net

**Nick Muhlestein**

## Blackfield
***"Self-Titled"***
**(KOCH)**

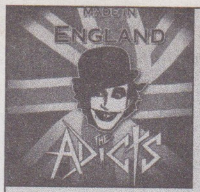
Steven Wilson of Porcupine Tree fame and Aviv Geffen, the focal point of Israeli youth and peace activism, have teamed up to form a two-piece outfit four years in the making. After meeting in 2001 (and bonding over, of all things, 60s and 70s classic rock) the two began to collaborate and record when their schedules allowed. By 2003 their eponymous debut was completed after plans for a one-off EP grew to become a full-length release. Now released in the U.S., the album prods at the boundaries of soothing interludes (pianos, acoustic guitars, and strikingly poetic lyrics), electric guitar rock ("Open Mind" fuses mellow verses with slicing riffs), and the joyous overriding presence of mid-tempo driving rock ("Pain" and "Cloudy Now" say it all) to produce a concoction worthy of the praise that Blackfield has attracted thus far.
www.blackfield.org

**Campbell**

## Longwave
***"There's a Fire"***
**(RCA)**

These guys are some Brit-rockers, sort of similar to The Thrills, with more down-tempo moments, which is really too bad because they're at their best when they're jamming and freewheeling. Even when they slow things down, as in "Underworld", Longwave still manages to make you stop and take note with their atmospheric underpinnings and moody sounds. Still though, it's the catchy as hell tracks like "Tell Me I'm Wrong" that really make this one worth recommending, poppy and sugary but still strong enough to stick with you. The piano driven, "The Flood" is also highly recommended, as it blends elements of Ben Folds and the softness of Jim Croche. Pretty cool.
www.longwavetheband.com

**Brian Greenaway**



## The Addicts
***"Made in England"***
**(SOS)**

The Addicts are as heinous as they are seminal, combining the snotty street sound of Stiff Little Fingers and Television with a logo that still turns heads nearly thirty years after their formation. "Made in England" is made up of the favorites from The Addicts' first four offerings: "Smart Alex", "This is Your Life", "The Sound of Music" and "Songs of Praise". At a whopping twenty-five tracks, "England" is a crusty mess of sound, with plenty of tracks that will have you stretching for the skip button with regularity. However, with cuts like "Viva La Revolution" and "Organized Confusion", The Addicts still show why they've had the longevity that they have.
www.sosrecords.us

**Brian Greenaway**

## Blood Red Throne
***"Altered Genesis"***
**(Earache)**

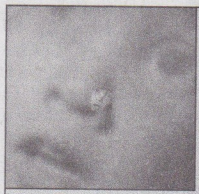
At a time when so may bands of the lauded Scandinavian scenes are moving in unusual, often questionable directions, Norway's Blood Red Throne are staunch traditionalists. With the album "Altered Genesis", Blood Red Throne eschew synths, clean vocals and poppish leanings to create 50 minutes of pure, unadulterated death metal, albeit with some thrashy flavoring in the riffs. They win few points for innovation and variation, but they display a dedication to intensity that is often lacking in many of the more modern "extreme" metal bands. Those looking for melody and memorability will find this lacking, but those who just want to bang some heads will find exactly what they're looking for..
www.bloodredthrone.tk

**Nick Muhlestein**

## Jed Whitey
***"Mongoloid Cage Match"***
**(Manic Ride)**

Jed Whitey is a bunch of guys from Australia that sound a lot like the Vandals. Also like the Vandals, they like to celebrate their ignorance. The majority of the songs are pretty simple structurally. There's a Devo cover on here, make what you will of that.
www.jedwhitey.com

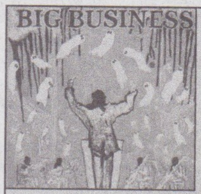
**Brian Greenaway**



## Infidel? / Castro!
***"Bioentropic Damage Fractal"***
**(Crucial Blast)**

This is an experimental and atmospheric piece of post-rock. Oddball samples, electro-metallic freakouts, jazzy interludes, squealing, atonal horns and oceanic waves of sound. This not an album for either the inpatient, or the unadventurous.
www.infidelcastro.com

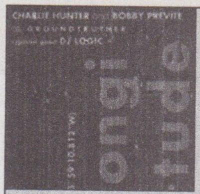
**Nick Muhlestein**



## Big Business
***"Head For the Shallow"***
**(Hydra Head)**

First of all, this band should be called BIG BALLS because hot damn dude, these guys are HEAVY! They are awesome and should be on that Gigantour thing with Megadeth and Dillinger Escape Plan, they are just that metal. As I write this, these maniacs are playing with Blood Brothers and The Plot To Blow Up The Eiffel Tower in Brooklyn. Big Business is the future of metal, BEWARE! Inspired artwork on this record to. Someone get me the keys to my monster truck so I can level this fuckin' yuppie town!
www.hydrahead.com

**Derek Meier**



## Charlie Hunter-Bobby Previte / Groundtruther feat. DJ Logic
***"Longitude"***
**(Thirsty Ear)**

Groundtruther is comprised of guitarist Charlie Hunter and Drummer Bobby Previte. This time around they enlist the services of DJ Logic. His scratching adds flavor to the already mind-bending experience of this album. There isn't much direction, but what "Longitude" lacks in direction, it more than makes up for in skill. Great guitar riffs by Charlie Hunter and thunderous drumming by Bobby Previte are the focal point of a tripped out journey that will keep the listener locked in for the duration.
www.thirstyear.com

**Melvin Gaye**

## Leftover Crack
***"Fuck World Trade"***
**(Alternative Tentacles)**

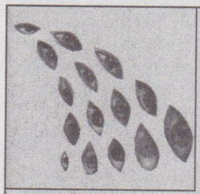
With a name like Leftover Crack, how could this album not rock? With a sound that blends ska, punk rock and the dirty vocal stylings Motorhead with the sneer of Dead Kennedy's, Leftover Crack is as potent as a hit off Courtney Love's crack pipe. Right from the opening song "Clear Channel (Fuck Off)" to the punk rock sing-along of "Burn Them Prisons', this album is chocked full of fantastic politically charged sing alongs that empowers listeners to fight the powers that be. This is a truly great album that revisits the glory days of punk rock, when bands stood for more than crying about the girl that got away. The cover art is the controversial image of George Bush spraying gasoline from a Haliburton fuel pump onto a burning Word Trade Center. o. Pure genius, just like the music.
www.alternativetentacles.com

**James Wright**

## Stiv Bators
***"L.A. Confidential"***
**(Bomp!)**

Of the Stiv retrospectives out there, one may think there is no need for another. However, Bomp trumps them all and comes out with the one collection to have in a glorious power pop cornucopia of unreleased outtakes from the 1979 and 1980 sessions recorded by Greg Shaw. (The album now works as a testament to both Shaw and Bators.) The fun, peppy, pop here did not actually win over Dead Boys fans at the time, but considering his chosen solo direction by itself, there is pure pop genius in "The Last Year" and "Not that way Anymore". The package includes a 24-page booklet with photos and detailed liner notes.
www.bomp.com

**Tom Schulte**



## Innaway
***"Self-Titled"***
**(Some)**

Southern California's Innaway's new release should be met with joy from genre-bending enthusiasts and 70s trip rockers alike. Oftentimes, Innaway's jam factor is equivalent to someone like Pink Floyd, only adjusted for inflation. To put a more modern spin on things, think along the lines of My Morning Jacket and a less world music-influenced Mars Volta. Synthetic elements (tasteful drum machine samples and groovy keys) are welcome compliments to the sonically thin, yet musically fulfilling sections of composition. But don't mistake Innaway for another dreamy, mellow outfit. Tracks like "Post FM" showcase beauty in diversity by merging their established mellow sound with driving beats. The disc is also loaded with instrumental gaps that carry a lot of the songs along, but the real cash cows are when Innaway's thin vocal chords are exposed, taking the songs to a higher level. Though instrumentation generally plays a larger role than lyrics, the soft and clean vocals appear soothing and pleading, a perfect addition, such as when they're in front of the Fugazi-esque rhythm section on "Stolen Days."
www.innawaymusic.com

**Campbell**

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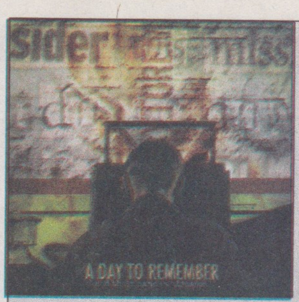



## A Day To Remember
***"And Their Name Was Treason"***
**(Indianola)**

Out of all the bands currently playing hardcore or emo, A Day To Remember is one the first to do both convincingly. With dual vocals that seamlessly glide back and forth between pop melodies and punishing hardcore, "And Their Name Was Treason" should appeal to fans of all genres. It's hard to resist the powerful sing-along vocals of "You Should Have Killed Me When You Had the Chance" or the floor-punching hardcore breakdowns of "Heartless". Sure, there are tons of bands that try to combine melody and hardcore, but A Day To Remember are just a cut above the rest.

www.myspace.com/adaytoremember

**James Wright**

## Kill Your Idols
***"From Companionship to Competition"***
**(Side One Dummy)**

Kill Your Idols is a badass punk rock/hardcore band from NYC who performs at a fast, brutal, and unrelenting pace, totally old school style. This new record sounds like some early DropDead mixed with some crazy metal riffs that lead into moshtastic breakdowns…YES! Don't be quick to disregard this band, and if you're up for a good time, definitely go see these madmen live when they roll through your town. Expect circle-pits and walls-of-death galore. GO!

www.sideonedummy.com

**Derek Meier**

## Inactive Messiah
***"Self-Titled"***
**(Black Lotus)**

This band is clearly having fun playing metal as there is an energy to this album that cannot be denied. With the riffing jumping from a chug to crunch to a groove, the music is kept fresh. Singer Mineiro divides his vocals up between short bursts of growling and low pitched death metal and the occasional high pitched scream. However, the thing that stands out here is the bass. You can actually hear it behind the barrage of guitar and it's doing something interesting.

www.inactivemessiah.com

**Justin Wittenmeier**

## Blusom
***"The Metapolitan"***
**(Second-Nature)**

Blusom's latest feels the way a carnival looks at night from far away. The chaos and carnies and crappy rides blend together to form a colored bump in the dark. Up close it has so many parts making it work, but from far away all you see is the beauty. Blusom has a lot going on in every song, but they keep it simple enough to draw the listener in without burying them in samples. Somewhere between the Postal Service and Iron and Wine, "The Metapolitan" set up tent and is drawing people from three counties over to hear their computerized cool breeze. From the deep tremolo folk guitar on "Mayday" to the infecting indie pop on "The Ticks: Tick, Tick" to the drunk meandering on "Green and Greys," Blusom wrap you up in a warm blanket for the duration.

www.blusom.com

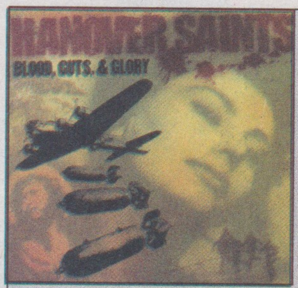
**Pete Sorer**

## Heimataerde
***"Gotteskrieger"***
**(Metropolis)**

Heimataerde doesn't mess around. After an ambient, horror-movie-esque intro, hard industrial drops, complete with distorted kicks, distorted vocals, and lyrics in German. Classic Wumpscut comes to mind, but the album has a few softer moments to mix things up. Expect big synths, big melodies, big everything. Vampire dancefloors everywhere are no doubt eating, er, sucking this stuff up. A plus is the random sample midway through from "Army of Darkness"; it's used seriously, which makes it even funnier.

www.heimataerde.de

**Cosmo Lee**




## Hanover Saints
***"Blood, Guts, & Glory"***
**(Strike First)**

Within 21 minutes "Blood, Guts, & Glory" completes its assignment: a sound existing somewhere between amped-up, old school hardcore and poppy, singalongs that don't distract from the album's rough edges. If it's any help, the album's promo shot features the band standing in front of Rancid and The Who posters. If that doesn't make sense, think Ann Beretta and Inquisition. A standout track is definitely found with the closer, "Headshot" which pumps out enough aggression and high velocity drumming to level the playing field between a mouse and a machine gun.

www.thehanoversaints.com

**Campbell**

## Mass Shivers
***"Self-Titled"***
**(Sickroom)**

Any song that has some sort of clap or rhythmic screaming beginning an album, i.e. "This is Language," means there is potential for a room full of people chanting the scream in harmony…which fuckin' rocks! In some ways the singers strained yells recall a young Trent Reznor without the industrial rock backing. As always, an EP is either solid or a waste of time because with only six songs most artists have limited time to prove themselves. This EP could stand tall over some full-length albums.

www.sickroomrecords.com

**Dailyn Brown**

## Darkwell
***"Metat[r]on"***
**(Napalm)**

The European metal scene is deeply rooted in this hybrid of gothic / symphonic metal sound to where many quality acts have come up through its ranks over the years. Darkwell is no exception, where its sound is focused on vocalist Stephanie Luzie. Their sounds draws similarities to Sins of Thy Beloved and Nightwish (without the over the top instrumentations), but the songs are a lot more focused. Beautiful classically influenced instrumentations with heavy guitar riffs create a smooth sailing sound that makes a unique sounding experience. Darkwell is on their way to continuing the string of powerful European acts to keep this genre alive.

www.napalmrecords.com

**Rei Nishimoto**

## Despised Icon
***"The Healing Process"***
**(Century Media)**

Tech-metalcore at it's heaviest. This Canadian sextet lacks much of the humor and experimentation of their peers, instead opting for an uncompromising metal assault. This is some insanely technical stuff, with extreme time and tempo changes throughout each track with little melodicism to ease the onslaught. Despised Icon are a metalcore Suffocation.
www.despisedicon.com

**Nick Muhlestein**

## Consafos
***"Tilting at Windmills"***
**(Greyday Productions)**

Ah, Omaha, so many ugly people at Target, so many rad bands. Don't let the creepy industrial-metal CD cover fool you, Consafos is a genre-defying mix of indie rock, folk, and Americana, fronted by Stefanie Drootin, traveling keyboardist for Bright Eyes. Her haunting vocals play perfectly over the honky-tonk sounds, yet always manage to touch on a wallowing, dark despair just under the surface. While comparisons to Rilo Kiley are sadly inevitable, Consafos has more in common with David Dondero than anything else (another one-degree-of-separation to Conor Oberst, Nebraskan) as the ballads and sentiments evoke a certain seediness and melancholy beauty. "Seneca" is truly nothing short of a masterpiece of storytelling, and the spacious harmonica and dreamy chorus of "Wide Eyed" begs to get itself stuck in your head. A must have, no matter what your feelings are on country music, Target, or people who pronounce windmill "windmeal".
www.greydayproductions.com

**Brian Greenaway**

## Cold War
***"From Russia With Love"***
**(Indecision)**

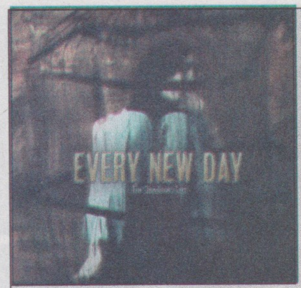
Cold War's technical riffing and hardcore breakdowns place "From Russia With Love" in the same class as Unearth's "The Oncoming Storm" only Cold War is slightly lighter on the blazing solo work. Vocalist Steve Helferich does not stray too far from the mold, but his style is not necessarily typical. His throat-clearing growls are placed well within the music in a way that compliments the instruments and does not distract from the skilled chops of drummer Marc Jackson and guitarists Geoff Harman and Justin Jolley. Most bands within the metal core style focus on playing riffs out the wazoo, and though Harmon and Jolley's guitars don't exactly break tradition, they don't fall short either. I think Ronald Reagan probably wasn't a fan, though.
www.coldwarmusic.com

**Campbell**

## Altered Aeon
***"Dispiritism"***
**(Black Lotus)**

The case claimed that they were a "technical power death metal" band from Sweden, which is code for, "Yet another goddamn melodic-death band clogging up the played out subgenre". But, upon listening to the album, Altered Aeon show that there is still some energy left in the genre. While so many other melodic-death bands are charging towards nu-metal, Altered Aeon remain rooted in thrash, and try to kick your ass rather than rather than insinuate themselves into your brain with pop song writing. And, they aren't kidding when they say 'technical', these guys can really tear it up. There's little innovation, but a lot of riffs. Not a bad deal.
www.alteredaeon.cjb.net

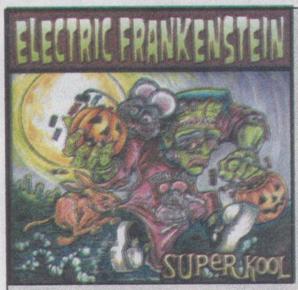
**Nick Muhlestein**




## Every New Day
***"The Shadows Cast"***
**(Hand of Hope)**

With vocals ranging from raspy to melodic, and a diverse musical style that equally embraces hardcore and metal, Every New Day keeps the quality music coming throughout their third release. The Winnipeg group often comes off sounding like a heavier Hot Water Music. They are a three-piece boasting a much bigger sound, with heavy, but catchy guitar riffs flowing perfectly into memorable choruses. Great metal riffs abound on songs like "Break the Mold" and "Ashes Fill the Air," and other tracks like "Chasing the Wind," reveal a tight rhythm section and more melodic approach. They also keep listeners on their toes; when a song seems like it's becoming predictable, they throw in a great guitar riff or unexpected time change.
www.everynewday.net

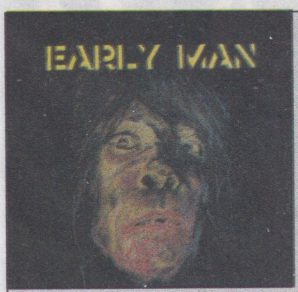
**Matt Walker**




## Electric Frankenstein
***"Super Kool"***
**(VMS / Morphius)**

Electric Frankenstein are a very abrasive punk band, who might be a great band for the greaser dudes driving around in their '57 Chevy's. Pretty fuckin' evil to. This band is true garage-horror rock, much better than a lot of the other shit being fed to the kids these days. Shit, now I want to go get tattooed.
www.morphius.com

**Derek Meier**




## Early Man
***"Self-Titled" EP***
**(Monitor)**

Early Man are a complete throwback to a time when music was truly about music. Their sound is a stripped down raw approach that combines charging thrash riffs with the power of stoner rock. Early Man channel the power of "Kill 'Em All" with the opening track "Fight", while they successfully meld together Black Sabbath and Kyuss on "Death Is The Answer To My Prayers". Early Man's debut EP is a raucous throwback to the classic bands of yesterday that will leave you in stoner rock induced coma.
www.earlymanarmy.com

**James Wright**

## Konono No. 1
***"Congotronics"***
**(Ache)**

"Congo Electronic Folk", that is the best way to describe this album. Released by Canadian label Ache Records (who have worked with the likes of Hot Hot Heat and Death From Above 1979), "Konono No. 1" proceed to conjure pure African tribal tunes with authentic instruments and sounds, conjuring images of people wearing little to nothing, dancing around a bon fire, having a blast.
www.acherecords.com

**Kevin Satterwhite**

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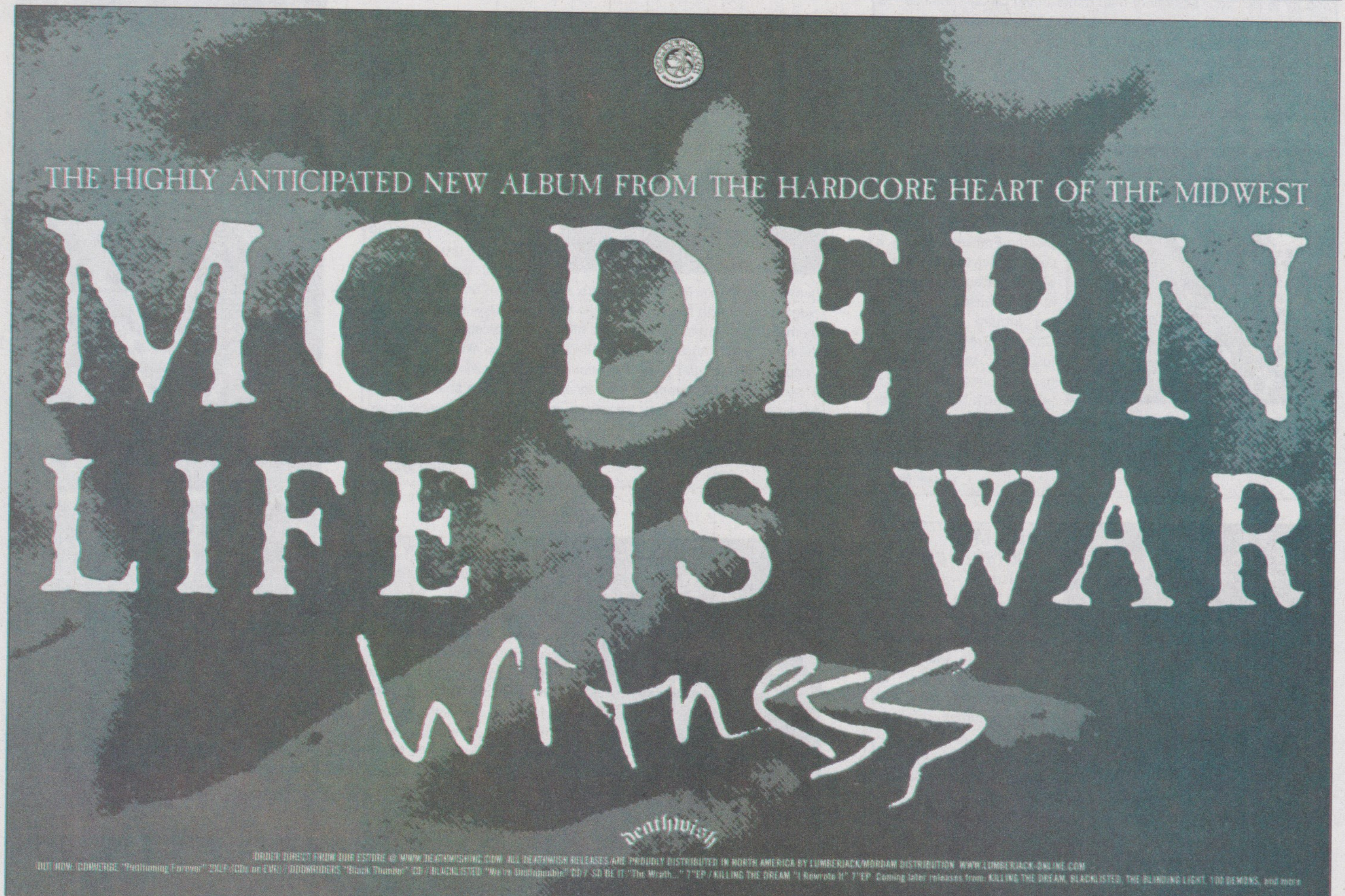
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## Complete Control
***"Reaction:"***
**(TKO)**

Straight up punk rock. "Reaction:" is what would happen if the Ramones mixed with Pennywise. Guitar-happy and full figured punk-rock. If you buy this one, know what you're getting yourself into, eleven tracks of guitars and yelling.
www.tkorecords.com

**Brian Greenaway**

## Oxford Collapse
***"A Good Ground"***
**(KANINE)**

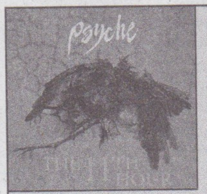
In their second full length, Oxford Collapse manages to blend spastic vocals and funky bass lines into a pretty solid dance-pop album. The songs remind me of what Chk Chk Chk probably sounded like in high school, before they got the massive amounts of drugs. Although they sometimes get stuck in generic pop-punk mode, this is pretty much a solid album. "The Boys Go Home" has a catchy, sing-a-long chorus and "Cracks in the Causeway" can draw even the staunchest naysayer into doing the hipster shuffle.
www.kaninerecords.com

**Dave Tow**

## Likwit Junkies
***"The LJ's"***
**(ABB)**

This album is the sound of Southern California. No surprise considering we've got Defari (Likwit Crew MC) and Babu (DJ for Dilated Peoples and a member of The World Famous Beat Junkies) together on a 17 song album. Coming together as the Likwit Junkies, they allow themselves to get raw where it's natural, and soft where it's appropriate, accessing a wide range of human experiences. This includes the weed head one, making references to Purple Kush in just about every song. They balance the less serious rhymes and jovial beats with some real shit, discussing child abuse and cowardly police officers. Basically, it's all good, on the verge of classic even.
www.abbrecords.com

**Rondi Collins**




## Psyche
***"The 11th Hour"***
**(METROPOLIS)**

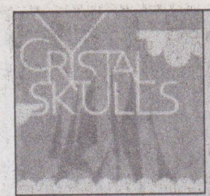
This is a progressive electronica album. It strives to be more melodic and soulful that what usually comes from the Metropolis camp. This is a new incarnation of the group that built a name combining horror and electronics in the '80s. Where that era may have had a foot in Alien Sex Fiend, Psyche now treads in the land of Alphaville. The shadow of that earlier blood-drenched horror is now a sorrowful haunting. The melodies are strikingly etched in crisp lines of electric piano.
www.metropolis-records.com

**Tom Schulte**

## Demons & Wizards
***"Touched By The Crimson King"***
**(SPV)**

On this, their second effort, the guys don't stray from their formula of blistering power metal. This album is well rounded, containing speed metal tracks, soft ballads, mid tempo rockers and songs that contain all the above. Schaffer's guitar playing is so fast and accented that it's a wonder his fingers don't fall off. Hansi's voice is top notch and very unique for this genre, not sounding like a opera singing wannabe but having more in common with Queen vocalist, Freddie Mercury. The drumming is fast and pounding, going well along side the bass which provides a heavy back drop.
www.spvusa.com

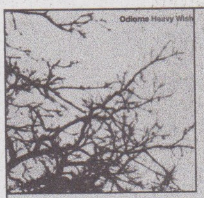
**Justin Wittenmeier**




## Crystal Skulls
***"Blocked Numbers"***
**(SUICIDE SQUEEZE)**

Yuuki Matthews and Casey Foubert, members of now defunct Seattle band, Seldom, team up with singer Christian Wargo and Ryan Phillips to make pop perfection. With Wargo's smart and charming lyrics, they've created ten intelligent and well written pop songs. The style is tight and clean as the carefully crafted arrangements stay clear and uncluttered. With comparisons to the likes of Steely Dan, Spoon, Sea and Cake and the Strokes, their incredibly catchy and well formed debut calls heavily on 70's pop, but maintains a markedly modern feel. With each listen, it's easy to hear how deceivingly complex the music is. Sticks in the stereo and in the head.
www.crystalskullsonline.com

**Sebastian U.**



## Odiorne
***"Heavy Wish"***
**(FILE THIRTEEN)**

Odiorne have drawn comparisons to the mighty Pink Floyd for good reason as they produce densely layered music with much going on. The drumming, bass, and guitars and keyboards are all extremely well played; this band is very progressive. However, with all that good comes a little bad. Their singer isn't the greatest. His style is a little too monotone for how dynamic the rest of the music can be and there is a constant echo to his voice, as if he recorded the vocals in a soup can. Still, it's not enough to put off the otherwise amazing music.
www.file-13.com

**Justin Wittenmeier**

## Caliban
***"The Opposite from Within"***
**(ABACUS)**

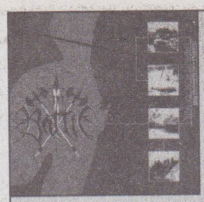
German hardcore enthusiasts Caliban have returned with their chaser to 2001's "Shadows Heart" (Prosthetic Records). The group are an import, however if you didn't pick up on the subtle accent you'd swear they were from the States, perhaps because they have toured so extensively in the US. Caliban still incorporates a portion of the epic death metal reverberations that ooze from their European surroundings and this time around they explore a more sensitive melodic side (think ala Life of Agony / 18 Visions type sensitive), but essentially they're still all about the breakdown and getting you mutherfockers moving around at the live show. And believe me, I've been there and that's exactly what happens. I've heard some negative feedback from some pre-existing Caliban fans, but as far as I'm concerned that's just another reason to give this band another shot if you weren't that impressed with their previous material. "The Beloved and the Hatred" is a great opening track and representation their latest approach. Trek this way if you fancy the output of bands like Disembodied, Sepultura, Atreyu and the aforementioned bands.
www.calibanmetal.com

**John Adams**

## Baby Teeth
***"Self-Titled"***
**(LUJO)**

Baby Teeth conjure a sound somewhere between piano-heavy modern indie rock acts like Keane and the retro pop acts that fleshed out their sound with keyboards, steady drums, and funky basslines. The trio collectively known as Baby Teeth perfectly hammer a likeable marriage between these two time periods and this is best appreciated in the dead-on vocal harmonies and tweaked keyboards on songs like, "Celebrity Wedding" and "Rock the Boat." Adding to the mix, writer Pearly Sweets doesn't shy away from a ballad-esque lyric style. Many of the songs have the lyrical potential to be considered on a similar level with the hit ballads of the 60s and 70s, but the closest cut on this record has to be the closer, "Dynamite Explodes". Baby Teeth is best suited for fans of off-the-wall artists or throwback sounds to the decades of old.
www.babyteethmusic.com

**Campbell**



## In Battle
***"Welcome to the Battlefield"***
**(METAL BLADE)**

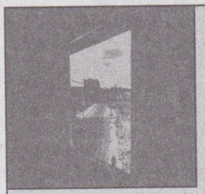
I was all set to make fun of these guys for writing in their own press kit that their new album "is a fucking killer man." I mean, isn't that for me to decide? Who's the fucking critic here anyway? Me, that's who; I'm the fucking critic so don't tell me if this is a fucking killer man; I'll tell you if this is a fucking killer man, and I'll tell you in my own terms and in my own sweet time. Now then, I'll officially go on record, agreeing with album producer Erik Rutan that this album, "is a fucking killer man." It really rather is quite the killer indeed, especially the killer guitar. The guitar player does more in your typical In Battle song than most guitar players do in a lifetime. He's in fucking guitar bootcamp on this mother. The songs maintain a furiously thrashing pace that would be too much for me if not for the ample tempo variations thrown in just before the nigh unbearable becomes truly unbearable. The vocals have that raw, coarse death metal thing going on and there doesn't seem to be anywhere to go with it anymore. The album cover artwork is decidedly amateur, but I love the 1980's third-tier thrash metal band style logo, two axes crossed, a sword pointed down through the axes' intersection, "In Battle" writ across the assemblage of weaponry in pointy angular letters.
www.metalblade.com

**DICK**

## Dol Ammad
***"Star Tales"***
**(BLACK LOTUS)**

This is some wildly over the top operatic and electronic space metal. Witness the 12 person choir howl over the waves of synthesized noise and futuristic sound effects along with crunchy, somewhat speed metalish guitarwork. The band displays a firm grasp of dynamics, however, frequently trading in the histrionics for some spaced out interludes.
www.dolammad.com

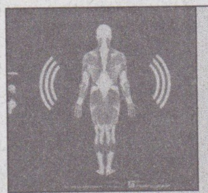
**Nick Muhlestein**



## Jesu
***"Self-Titled"***
**(HYDRAHEAD)**

A new project featuring ex-Godflesh/Napalm Death main man Justin Broadrick, Jesu is a sonic assault on the senses. With the longest track on this release coming in just under 7 minutes, Jesu has more in common with bands like Cult of Luna and Neurosis than anything currently infiltrating the mainstream. Whether it be the jagged guitar riffs in "Friends are Evil" or the tripped out "Sun Day", this release is anything but conventional. Recommended for fans of music that strives to push the envelope and jar the listener to the core.
www.hydrahead.com

**James Wright**



## Frantic Bleep
***"The Sense Apparatus"***
**(THE END)**

Norway's cold atmosphere has a chilling effect on how their musicians create their music. In the case of Frantic Bleep, taking elements of progressive melodies with a dark overtone, they created a sound that sets them apart from the rest. Welcome to a new musical experience upon playing this disc. In some instances, they have moments that draw similarities to Type O Negative and Moonspell with their droning overtones, but at other times, they also have elements that could appeal to fans of Katatonia, older Opeth and Arcturus with its progressively gloomy sound and expanded selections. Regardless of this, the entire disc features a wide array of songs with no two songs repeating the same elements. Frantic Bleep is for forwarding thinking music listeners who like their music more as an experience than just ear candy.
www.theendrecords.com

**Rei Nishimoto**

## Gravy Train!!!!
***"Are You Wigglin?"***
**(Kill Rock Stars)**

Gravy Train has been making some big noise since last year's "Ghost Boobs EP." Le Tigre took them on tour, their name was all over the Bay Area and Oakland was the proud parent of a misfit band made up of "hot babes and gay wads." This release shows them stepping away from dirty rap and pushing more sixties inspired pop down our throats. The Beach Boys could have written "Pussy Sauce" except for the fact that it is about putting sauce on a significant other's pussy and sometimes it tastes good and sometimes it tastes bad. "Nudies from the Road" is about the complex matters of missing your loved ones while touring. The best way to combat loneliness is to take naked pictures of yourself and send them home. "Are You Wigglin?" shows a more mature sound (if you can use mature in the same sentence as GT!!!!) and a definite growth, but this is still Gravy Train!!!! Boobs, beavers, bitches and blowjobs still shine in the sun like soccer championship trophies.
www.gimmegravytrain.com

**Pete Sorer**

## Winter of Apokalypse
***"Solitary Winter Night"***
**(Moribund)**

While there are many who will discount Winter of Apokalypse simply because they're an American black metal band, they'll have a tough time questioning their authenticity of dedication. "Solitary Winter Night" is straight forward, no-frills black metal, raw and fast and dark. This album is perhaps not quite the epitome of, um, necrocity, as it isn't utterly devoid of any bass or midrange, nor overrun with static, but this is much, much closer to Darkthrone and early Ulver than it is any of your 'symphonic' black metal bands, whom they do not resemble in the least. That said, it is also utterly devoid of any sort of originality, but it's the real deal.
www.moribundcult.com

**Nick Muhlestein**

## For the Worse
***"The Chaos Continues"***
**(Bridge Nine)**

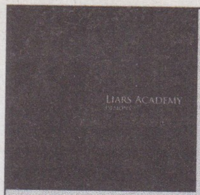
This old school style hardcore album has a sheer intensity and energy that sets them apart from most of their contemporaries. Most of the speedy tracks are around one and a half minutes long but the band gets their message across quickly. The socially conscious lyrics address issues ranging from child molestation on "Catholic Guilt" to songs like "Patriot for a Day," which launches a scathing attack on how America celebrates the 4th of July. For the Worse leaves few issues untouched while always rocking hard. They play with the passion that put hardcore on the map to begin with.
www.fortheworse.com

**Matt Walker**

## Agnostic Front
***"Another Voice"***
**(Nuclear Blast)**

First off, it's really fucking cheesy to dub this album "Another Voice", what with 1992's "One Voice" being perhaps the pinnacle of tough guy New York hardcore. AF is kinda setting themselves up to some lofty aspirations here, but I suppose nothing could be worse than their past two or three albums. Thankfully Roger, Vinnie, and the crew have abandoned their street-punk disguises for the kind of hardcore that put them on the map in the first place. As always, a steady stream of younger (and, let's face it, fresher) guests come barreling through the studio doors for this one, most notably the singers from Earth Crisis, Terror, and Hatebreed. Also, the production enigma Zeuss (Shadows Fall, Sworn Enemy) is here to add to bulk to the brawn. And while Agnostic Front will never get any younger (ahem, we're talking the original members here, not the new recruits), they still know how thrash and brawl like the best/worst of them.
www.agnosticfront.com

**Jason Schreurs**



## The Liars Academy
***"Demons"***
**(Equal Vision)**

The truly great rock songwriters that have emerged in the history of music have all bled for their music. You can hear Springsteen or Strummer getting lost in the words they sing and that's what makes them truly great. Liars Academy Vocalist Ryan Shelkett pours his heart into his lyrics, and as cliché as that sounds right now, in this case, it's the truth. His open diary approach to lyric writing and soulful delivery leave the listener spellbound and dying for another listen. "Action Adventure" may just be one the best songs I've heard this year. The only way this album could be considered a lie, was if I failed to tell you how good it is.
www.liarsacademy.com

**James Wright**

## Pungent Stench
***"Ampeauty"***
**(Nuclear Blast)**

Groove-laden metal that never quite commits to being death or thrash. "Ampeauty" is an instantly infectious release from Pungent Stench, purveyors of some of the most amusing gore metal around. From the Testament-influenced chunk of "Invisible Empire" through the doomy aura of "No Guts, No Glory" this album is dynamic, bold and unforgettable. It's almost as if Discharge slowed down, listened to a bit more Venom/Skynyrd and read lots of Wes Craven to up the gross quotient. Geez...I just described Entombed. Ok, it sounds like disgusting Entombed. Regardless, Ampeauty is one stellar fucking album. The fact that the band can infuse so many diverse elements without alienating their death metal core is fascinating, frustrating and fantastic. This is what Satyricon tried to with his last album and screwed up royally.
www.pungentstench.net

**Keith Carman**

## Anaal Nathrakh
***"Domine Non Es Dignus"***
**(Season of Mist)**

Anaal Nathrakh are black metal with a lot of weird programming shit going on in the mix. The sound is raw, but very digitized and mechanical as if run through the CPU in TRON. They then unabashedly add an endless drum machine blast beat and litter the songs with the unexpected: smooth and beautifully sung male vocals, rapid but soulful guitar solos and even a guttural grindcore growl or two. I'm sure it's not what the black metal purists would order from their local Pink Dot, but I'll take a little innovation and mixed technique with my black metal any day. And the first track is called "I wish I could vomit blood on you people." For that alone it gets one of those Beavis and Butthead inspired thumbs up, and for the poet in all of us they close out the album with a track that utilizes passages from a Dylan Thomas poem, "Rage rage against the dying of the light." I appreciate that coming from a black metal band. I really do.
www.season-of-mist.com

**DICK**

## Infernal Legion
***"Your Prayers Mean Nothing"***
**(Moribund)**

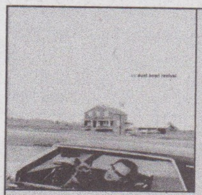
Death Metal has changed a lot in its two decade history, but you wouldn't know it while listening to Infernal Legion. This album has late 80's written all over it, and it's a straight ahead piece of old-school death metal, with some fairly thin, rough production giving it a slight black metal feel. It's also surprisingly moderately paced, even occasionally venturing into some vaguely doomish territory. Nothing terribly original, but it's fairly distinctive in the modern scene, where so many bands seem determined to be the next Suffocation.
www.infernallegion.com

**Nick Muhlestein**

## Occult
***"Elegy for the Weak"***
**(Candlelight)**

Fairly unadventurous black thrash. Occult blend together healthy doses of both black metal and thrash metal, and as a result they wind up sounding not entirely unlike a somewhat better-produced version of "Persecution Mania" era Sodom. Occult get right into it with a fast paced tune buoyed by thrashing guitars and a steady drum beat. The next song, probably having something lyrically to do with radioactive fallout (it's called "Nuclear Torment") slows the pace down and has the band enter a nice thick and dark groove. They are excellent at what they do. They follow a formula that works for me almost as well as the Republican formula of tax breaks for the rich, dismantling social safety nets and workers' rights abuses work for 50.8% of the stupid fucking people in this stupid fucking country. Bring back FDR! Bring back "Persecution Mania" era Sodom! Occult win the cool song title award: "Slaughtering the Pigs." Kill those fucking pigs; cut their fat piggy throats. Go Occult!
www.candlelightrecords.co.uk

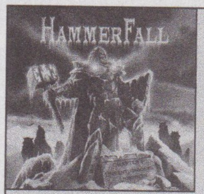
**DICK**



## OX
***"Dust Bowl Revival"***
**(Second-Nature)**

Listening to Ox is like slipping into a pair of Neil Young's jeans, borrowing a flannel from J Mascis and wearing Jeff Tweedy's shoes. Their alt-country is rough in all the right spots, damaged in the others and happy where needed. With the amalgamation of people making up OX (eight different musicians from different bands and different styles) the consistently good songs and mood fitting transitions are almost surprising. Too many hands sometimes make a bad record, but OX has the right mix. "Trans Am" starts the disc in a rainy mood that Sufjan Stevens would feel comfortable in. The whole disc makes me yearn for a cabin in the heat of summer, middle of the Bear Paw Mountains, with rain pouring outside. If that isn't enough to convince you, OX hit number one on the Canadian National Radio Chart. They BEAT Radiohead's "Hail to the Thief." Either the Canadians HATE Radiohead or they know that OX is worth the listen.
www.oxmusic.ws

**Pete Sorer**




## Hammerfall
***"Chapter V: Unbent, Unbowed, Unbroken"***
**(Nuclear Blast)**

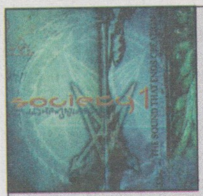
Few bands display a dedication to traditional heavy metal equal to that of Sweden's Hammerfall. Of course, this is good or bad depending upon who you ask. Certainly, everything you're expecting is here: wailing, operatic vocals straightforward, pounding drums, screaming tapped leads, etc. However, you aren't going to hear anything you aren't expecting when you put on "Chapter V:...". Still, not every band can be groundbreaking, and Hammerfall certainly understand how classic metal is supposed to sound. The only question is whether or not you think that you really need anymore old-school power/classic metal. If you think you do, you can't go wrong with album.
www.Hammefall.de

**Nick Muhlestein**

## Hand to Hand
***"A Perfect Way to Say Goodbye"***
**(Lifeforce)**

Hand to Hand's debut album doesn't break into any new territory, but focuses on the screamy verse / melodic chorus dynamic. The two styles they combine here work because they have the skills to pull it off. The heavier parts don't hold back, while the more melodic choruses are simply sung. They make it fit better than most. If you prefer Grade over Underoath, check these guys out.
www.handtohandmusic.com

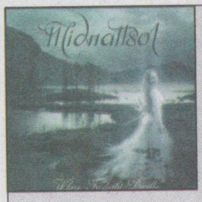
**Matt Walker**



## Society 1
***"The Sound That Ends Creation"***
**(Earache)**

Society 1 frontman Matt Zane's over the top exploits have somewhat overshadowed the music he creates with Society 1. Whether it was his "Backstage Sluts" porn videos featuring Mark McGrath and Fred Durst or being suspended by meat hooks during a live performance, Zane is essentially on the forefront of shock rock. In the past, Society 1 albums have relied on charging industrial rhythms that speed through from start to finish, but with "The Sound That Ends Creation", Zane has finally found his niche. Combining the industrial ferocity that Society 1 are known for, Zane has adopted more melodic delivery that makes the songs that much more memorable. "No Father", "I Love Her" and "Let Me Live" are some of the band's most melodic material to date, but also some of the best material. Guitarist Sin has found the perfect balance between the big guitar riffs that rocked the early '90s and the seething aggression that Society 1 requires. Although there are still moments of sonic fury like the album opener 'It Isn't Me" and 'Lord" for die hard Society 1 fans, this is a much more powerful and dynamic band now. "The Sound that Ends Creation" is by far Society 1's most accomplished and powerful release to date. The music shines and overshadows any of the antics that come along with Matt Zane and company.
www.society1.net

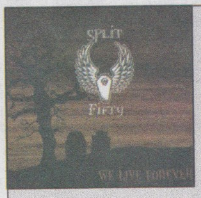
**James Wright**



## Midnattsol
***"Where Twilight Dwells"***
**(Napalm)**

This is a decidedly european affair, combining less than aggressive, low-key metal with a heavy folk flavoring and some gothic ambiance, all of which is topped off by the gentle, ethereal vocals of Carmen Espanaes. This may not fall into everyone's definition of heavy metal, as the acoustic guitars are just as important as the electric ones, but Midnattsol gains a lot of mood and melody in the exchange, all while maintaining a fairly somber execution, while not becoming too schmaltzy or melodramatic.
www.midnattsol.com

**Nick Muhlestein**



## Split Fifty
***"We Live Forever"***
**(Hell Bent)**

This album is akin to tossing melodic hardcore into a blender and offering the end result to a sedated Davey Havok to chug. Punk beats ala Strike Anywhere and guitar riffs reminiscent of Thrice are at no shortage here, and enough gang vocals to make up a punk rock choir. Split Fifty doesn't tread too far from this style except in rare sections. Most evident on "Guns and Cigarettes", a toned-down track that offers a slight departure from such to-the-point songs as "Our Father of Lies" and "She Smells Like Headaches and Alcohol". They're allegedly going to be on tour forever, so if black t-shirts are your scene you know what to do.
www.splitfifty.com

**Campbell**

## Scorngrain
***"Cyberwarmachine"***
**(Dynamic Arts)**

Scorngrain have provided a strong piece of music with their debut. They offer a unique take on metal by mixing thrashy riffs with industrial and techno noise. Unlike most bands who try to do this, this band actually integrates the odd noises fully with their metal attack rather than just sprinkling it throughout. The vocals are top notch. Not quite black metal, but with some higher pitched screaming and shrieking that combines with the unique sonics to make an overall atmospheric sound. The guitar tones harken back to the old days of thrash metal, albeit with better production. The drumming isn't anything special but it works well enough.
www.scorngrain.com

**Justin Wittenmeier**

## The Academy Is
***"Almost Here"***
**(Fueled By Ramen)**

Any critic who dismisses "Almost Here" as anything another other than great song writing is DEAD WRONG. Academy Is have crafted a powerful combination of hooky song writing and soaring melodies and melded with William Beckett's "open diary" lyrics. In "Black Mamba" Beckett raves, "Oh Mr. Magazine, I never wrote one single thing for you or your so called music scene/ You don't mean a thing to me." His delivery is heartfelt on this and the rest of the album is something truly special. There are albums that start musical trends and "Almost Here" with it's powerful melodies and guitar crunch, is powerful enough to do it. Academy Is' "Almost Here" defies musical classification and is a truly amazing album that will stand the test of time.
www.theacademyis.com

**James Wright**

## God Dethroned
***"The Lair of the White Worm"***
**(Metal Blade)**

From the opening note on 'Nihilism', God Dethroned managed to fill their sound with tons of guitar leads and a massive thrash attack that will leave any longtime fan satisfied. Taking the guitar harmonies ala Arch Enemy and older In Flames, with the darker, black/death/thrash assault similar ala Satyricon and Dimmu Borgir, they have a little of everything that would entice all metalheads alike. Technical guitar freaks will love Henri Sattler and Isaac Delahaye's dual guitar attack, while adrenaline freaks will love the sheer brutality their sound creates. This is one of the few records that is consistently strong from beginning to end, never losing its momentum at any point. While God Dethroned is one of the long standing acts that never quite became a scene leader, they instead flew under the radar and created an amazing record.
www.metalblade.com

**Rei Nishimoto**

## Raging Speedhorn
***"How The Great Have Fallen"***
**(SPV)**

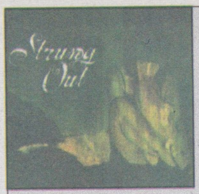
Though hailing from England, this band is clearly influenced by the great american band Pantera and this is a good thing. The guitar riffs are full of nothing but groove and speed, knocking you down like a freight train. The production is loud but also a little muddy, giving the music a sludgy feel to it. The duel vocalists scream their asses off. Drumming is extremely solid with a did pace and keeping the songs together with a powerful back bone. The lower pitched screaming can get old, but sound extremely well when hitting higher range. Phil Anselmo would approve enough not to kick their ass.
www.ragingspeedhorn.co.uk

**Justin Wittenmeier**

## Yyrkoon
***"Occult Medicine"***
**(The End)**

It is amazing what the European underground can produce when it involves extreme metal. Taking the sheer brutality of Morbid Angel style of classic death metal with lots of technical guitar work, Yyrkoon has entered upon an area of metal that has been missing in this genre since Krisiun and Vader first made their mark on the scene. The technical guitar work of Stephane Souteyrand is where it helps make the band's sound stand out. His style of play draws similarities to older In Flames and Pantera, where it enhances the freshness within their sound. Yyrkoon brings life to an oversaturated genre, and possibly breathing new life to help kick in some new influences. Anyone who thrives on technical guitar work in death metal should definite give this a listen.
www.theendrecords.com

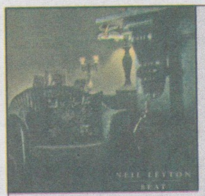
**Rei Nishimoto**



## Strung Out
***"Exile In Oblivion"***
**(Fat Wreck Chords)**

Typically known as one of Fat's more depressing bands without losing their pop/punk sensibility, there is still a definite darkness and moody aura that permeates "Exile In Oblivion". And it's kinda cool. Hypersonic tracks that have this pre-lameness AFI vibe to them make for an almost eerie album that is cool in its lost atmosphere. It's not an entirely new thing for this Rush-meets-Pennywise act (we call 'em prog-punk), but it's still fresh. Imagine it as the punk rock equivalent of trailing Willow The Wisp through some deep, dark forest. You get lost, cold and hungry, wondering if you'll ever get out alive. But before the answer can come, the CD is over.
www.strungout.com

**Keith Carman**



## Neil Leyton
***"Beat"***
**(Fading Ways)**

Anyone want to listen to a little five-track EP by the ex-singer of Canada's The Conscience Pilot? Sure you do. You'd think the whole whiney, post-punk thing wouldn't work here, but you'd be wrong, "Beat" is damn good. Think of Billy Corgan as stripped down as possible, complete with cracked vocals and simple guitars. "Soliloquy" is arguably the best track on the album, as Leyton's tortured voice sounds extremely tasteful when layered over his clumsy chords and his bitter, "Your words are just a soliloquy for two" is nothing short of brilliant. Yes, brilliant is a pretty strong adjective. Or noun. Or whatever it is.
www.neileyton.com

**Brian Greenaway**

## New Brutalism
***"2001-2003"***
**(Lujo)**

A strange combination of songs that leave you scratching your head, New Brutalism have taken weird to a whole new level. With instruments made completely out of solid aluminum and song titles that are all numbers, the band has written an album brimming with furious punk rock. The album sounds a little too raw by today's recording standards making the album sound dated. Unfortunately for New Brutalism, none of the material here stands out enough to warrant any repeated listening.
www.lujorecords.com

**James Wright**

## Incantation
***"Decimate Christendom"***
**(Olympic)**

Incantation, a band with a long-standing tradition within death metal; by many, Incantation is considered one of the strongest standing pillars of the genre. To others they are a Bigfoot in the woods, disparaging their existence, and further more doubting their effect upon the reality that is the current death metal scene. I can neither confirm nor deny any of these remarks. They have come to me through obscured and varied sources. As a journalist, it is my ethical duty to protect my sources, thus I give you, with anonymity of my sources in tact, the opinions of many stalwarts of the death metal community concerning Incantation and their newest effort, "Decimate Christendom." John Doe #1 says, "Decimate fuckin' Christendom is Incantation at their mother fuckin' raging best asshole!" John Doe #2 countered by saying, "Dude, are you fuckin' jokin'? 'Onward' is the total shit, but this album still rules. Incantation!!!!". John Doe the Third disagreed with the previous John Does by adding, "Look, Incantation fuckin' rules. Incantation is Incantation, yo! I don't know why you gotta be all up in their shit and judging it yo!" All make very valid points, and I'll let their words speak for themselves. The only question that remains for you is, "Does Incantation rule now more than they did then or have they always ruled at a uniform level of greatness?" The fuckin' world, dude, may never know.
www.olympicrecordings.com

**DICK**

## Kamelot
***"The Black Halo"***
**(SPV)**

There are very few bands that can pull off power metal without sounding like a cheesy machismo version of wrestler Razor Ramone. Kamelot are one of the fortunate, as their music features well rounded musicians crafting solid power metal without the cheese. On "The Black Halo", Kamelot has turned things up a notch with an arsenal of shredding solos, pounding rhythms and dramatic vocals that would make Ronnie James Dio throw up his horns in approval. "The Haunting (Somewhere In Time)" will have any old-school headbanger rocking, while the title track's devastating opening riff and technical prowess would make Dimebag proud. The only drawback to Kamelot is the fact that their music can often border on musical masturbation. With solos that indulge their own musical desires, the songs can often feel like their reserved for only the elite of power metal fans. Despite that, Kamelot's "The Black Halo" is undoubtedly a contender for the best power metal album of the year. Look out Iced Earth, because Kamelot are aiming to dethrone you as the leaders of the genre.
www.kamelot.com

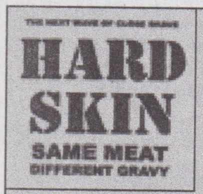
**James Wright**

## Freedom Call
***"The Circle of Life"***
**(SPV)**

Following the tradition of the strong European heavy metal sound with strong musicianship and theatric themes, Freedom Call continues that wave of success on their latest release. This release does have anthemic style songs the European power metal bands are traditional known for, but is not done in an over-the-top way ala Manowar and Helloween. But the distinctive part of their sound is their guitar and keyboard melody tradeoff, where it draws many similarities to bands like Stratovarius. They still do hang on to some older influences on songs on the second half of this release. Overall, Freedom Call is a band showing they are trying to evolve their sound within a genre that is not always accepting towards change.
www.spvusa.com

**Rei Nishimoto**

## Hard Skin
***"Same Meat Different Gravy"***
**(TKO)**




This oi band's record is as rude and rousing, as crude and commanding, indeed as street and sincere as they come. Declaring itself "the next wave to the close shave", steps up to the pub's stage using only the fewest chords to craft suitable new anthems for the boots and braces crowd. The rough and ready working class album might not be the equal to the group's phenomenal out-of-nowhere Helen of Oi debut, but it is pretty darn close. And, in case you really intend to use this as a soundtrack to "smack a goth ... kick a hippy" as the song "Skinhead" declares, bassist Fat Bob clears things up: "Hard Skin is about having a laugh and having a say and that's what we are doing. Having a laugh and having a say. So stop thinking and start drinking."
www.tkorecords.com

**Tom Schulte**

## D.Y.S.
***"Brotherhood"***
**(TAANG!)**

The eleven tracks of loose and loud Boston hardcore fly by like a five-song EP on this new 11-song CD issue of 1983 recordings from Dept. of Youth Services. Notable from the straightedge band that wears its convictions in its lyrics is "Escape" with is Excalibur introduction and an unreleased version of "Wolfpack" featuring the Hüsker Dü trio on backing vocals.
www.taang.com

**Tom Schulte**

## Blowfly
***"Fahrenheit 69"***
**(ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES)**

If Rick James was alive today and rapping, I'm sure he'd sound something like Blowfly. With cheesy '80s pornoesque beats and a slow lyrical flow that's not far off from Wesley Willis, it's hard to tell if Blowfly is serious or if this album is meant to be put into the same musical category as Weird Al. From comical rhymes about pussy in "The Great Debate" or grade school like immaturity on "I Believe My Dick Can Fly", Blowfly is a novelty act in the vein of Afroman and the aforementioned Wesley Willis.
www.blowflymusic.com

**James Wright**

## Drawn and Quartered
***"Return of the Black Death"***
**(MORIBUND)**

The return of the black death would be preferable to this so-so slab of death metal hoo-ha. The band plays your typical fast, blast beat laden style of death metal with vocals more suited to the grindcore environment than the death metal environment, but that is not a negative criticism since Drawn and Quartered take their music right up to that hazy border land between the two genres of death and grind. They offer nothing new, but in doing so protect themselves from any overt negative criticism. I can not complain on the grounds that if you are somebody who likes their death metal pushed right to that death metal edge, where death metal meets grindcore then you are not going to be disappointed with this album. However, if you're keen on the U2's "Joshua Tree" or perhaps more appropriately Obituary's first couple of slabs, then this might not be your cup of cess. Enjoy with a side of bacon.
www.moribundcult.com

**DICK**

## THETA
***"Tone Poems for Sad Times"***
**(TRANSLATION LOSS)**

There's only one word that describes THETA and their atmospheric blend of spacey guitar riffs, emotive vocals and complex timing changes; beautiful. Bask in the sonic ecstasy of "Mutants" with its hypnotic guitars and soothing melodies, while "6-8" with its ethereal textures and melodic beauty will leave listeners mesmerized. Their sound provokes comparisons to Dredg, but THETA is slightly more complex with their experimental arrangements. Experimental, avant-garde, and powerful, "Tone Poem for Sad Times" transcends musical boundaries to reach genres that most music fans would ever know existed. There are records that elevate music into an art form, THETA's "Tone Poems for Sad Times" is an album that extends further than music to create a sonic experience that is truly breathtaking.
www.myspace.com/theta

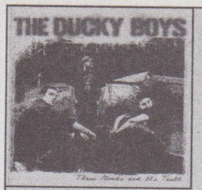
**James Wright**

## Feller Quentin
***"I am not a Monster"***
**(ECHELON)**

Feller Quentin must have a machine that adds hours into the day. He is part of to many bands to have time to release a solo record this good. He takes a big role in two hip hop acts, but lays down a full album of floaty folk songs that carry just as well. Quentin plays everything on "I am not a Monster." From the mandolin to the banjo, the cello to the guitar, and the beats to vocals, it is all Quentin. His songs are the perfect companion for warm summer camping trips, when the sun is down and everyone is sitting around the fire with PBRs in tow. If Beck could mix one part "Mellow Gold" with three parts "Sea Change" and add a splash of Isaac Brock he would probably end up with Feller Quentin's folk tunes.
www.fellerquentin.com

**Pete Sorer**

## The Ducky Boys
***"Three Chords and the Truth"***
**(THORP)**




After six years, the Ducky Boys are back with "Three Chords and the Truth." Ignoring the fact that their record is titled after a long-running stereotype, and perhaps paying homage to the power of honest song writing, the Ducky Boys prove themselves to be much more than another band off Boston's mean streets. Sure, a formula exists, but it is completely recognizable as the Ducky Boys' style. The new material stays true to the Social Distortion and Rancid-influenced records of years past while adding a hint of modernity. Longtime fans will not be disappointed and can look forward to more consistent records in the future. According to a statement: "Thanks for waiting this out. It won't be six years before you see another record." So, let the Boys' cover of Ben E. King's "Stand By Me" serve as collateral on that promise and also as gratitude for your faithful support.
www.duckyboys.com

**Campbell**

## Tsjuder
***"Desert Northern Hell"***
**(SEASON OF MIST)**

Ah, the black metal. Is it not the most evil of all the metals? It is evil with a capitol "E." It is perhaps, but not certainly, even evil with a drawn out "eeeee" sound; as in "Eeeeeeeevil," and almost always with an exclamation mark: Eeeeeeevil! Maybe even two, three or four exclamation marks, Eeeeeeevil!!!!, in order to convey, without doubt, the emphatic absolute nature of the evil. And thus enters Tsjuder with two high hat crashes, an "argh" and a blast beat. It's black metal, you betchya, and they ain't messing around with synthesizers, female vocals or compromises as the back of the album jacket says, "No Synthesizers, no female vocals, no fucking compromises!" So, you know, if you're into it: go burn down a church, hail satan, pray to Odin, daydream of long ago Viking raids and wrap a stinking fish up into a flat potato bread. Uff da! One final note to this non-review, due to Norwegian black metal's seeming infatuation with all things fascist and having a tendency towards Norwegian nationalism and anti-Semitism, the "Juder" in "TsJUDER's" name kind of worries me. I was unable to find out what it meant so take care if you do not want to support racism or fascism. I'm not saying Tsjuder are racist or fascist; I'm just saying to be wary. And as far as black metal goes, they are eminently listenable.
www.season-of-mist.com

**DICK**

## Slug & Murs
***"Felt 2: A Tribute to Lisa Bonet"***
**(RHYMESAYERS)**

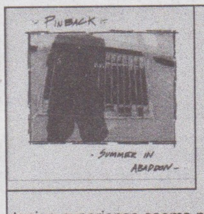
Slug of Atmosphere and Murs of Living Legends come together once again and offer up a funkadelic tribute to former Cosby co star Lisa Bonet (Angel Heart, High Fidelity), who was once in the spotlight for her marriage to pop nobody Lenny Kravitz. The album sounds like it could have been a tribute to Pam Grier or even Black exploitation films of the 70's with it's soulful blend. Slug throws around tons of metaphors that sometimes hit and sometimes miss, and Murs relies on his humorous punch lines to carry the rest of the weight. The two throw out plenty of disses on pretentious industry types, including a subtle mock of 50 cent, but the main topics are alcohol, females and getting some, and it's all done in that satirical fashion that they have become known for. Nothing throws this release over the top and both artists could have come a lot better with some of the hooks to throw over Ant's playful production. Murs delivers his cleanest lyrics on the first verse of "Marvin Gaye" and a few others that stand out on their own are "Early Mornin Tony" and "Woman Tonight". Neither emcee are at their absolute best but the few shining moments are worth it. If Lisa Bonet were to get a hold of a copy she would probably enjoy and then wonder who are these guys?
www.rhymesayers.com

**Teddy**

## Nagg
***"Self-Titled"***
**(Dollar Record)**

Hailing from that juicy neighborhood in San Francisco known as The Tenderloin, Nagg throws rock into the streets like a guy who got a little to touchy-feely in the private lap dance booth. With Amy Ward (of AC/DShe) growling out vocals over bar rock, Nagg is winning the hearts of the strippers and the strippees in The Tenderloin. Poised to take on strip club neighborhoods everywhere, this release cranks through 12 songs in 31 minutes without a moment to catch your breath. From the chukka-chukka-chukka guitar of "Another Day" to the gutter ballad of "Little Boy Sad," Nagg makes their 31 minutes worth it. And just think, a lap dance for that long would probably be over $300!
www.nagg.net

**Pete Sorer**



## Pinback
***"Summer In Abaddon"***
**(Touch & Go)**

The innovative dueling basses and vocals of Rob Crow (Heavy Vegetable) and ABSIV (aka) Zack (Three Mile Pilot) create a balance in the precision of the bands' "DIY" home recorded sound. Every listening experience seems new because a guitar riff pops up, or a vocal harmony that was before overlooked and buried within other layers continues to unfold with each returning chorus. "AFK", (Pinbacks' newest single) begins with a frustrated energy that gracefully transitions into a subdued end, while "This Red Book" floats through your head like a bedtime story, but if revisited, envelopes the listener with its sinister convolution. It is refreshing to hear the gradual maturing of Pinbacks' already superior sound.
www.tgrec.com

**Dailyn Brown**

## YOB
***"The Illusion Of Motion"***
**(Metal Blade)**

The title of this album's opening track is the perfect description for YOB's own sound: "Ball Of Molten Lead." Kicking around the stoner/doom metal scene for just about a decade, YOB has become the definitive sludge band. Well, definitive on this side of Sleep that is. Utilizing a vocal attack reminiscent of Sabbath-era Ozzy as laid over detuned riffs that are about as fast as a tank—yet equally as destructive—the end result on The Illusion Of Motion is like the mythological equivalent of Fu Manchu. Yet while those guys riff fast about cars and chicks, these dudes are along the lines of Electric Wizard: they've got the demons, wizards, oracles and occult dealings to sing about...over the course of four 12-minute songs. Epic indeed.
www.yobdoom.com

**Keith Carman**

## Axel Rudi Pell
***"The Ballads III"***
**(SPV)**

German guitar master Axel Rudi Pell returns with the third part of his collection of ballad series, and disappoint he does not. In this age of artists firmly against creating ballad oriented songs, Axel Rudi Pell keeps the spirit alive by creating well structured songs that could soon be instant classics. Much like this other works, he has a firm understanding of how to create ballads with feeling and technical excellence. This record also features an acoustic version of 'Forever Angel' and a cover of Rainbow's 'The Temple of the King,' which he does with class and style. This material could follow in the ranks of other AOR artists such as Michael Schenker and the Scorpions who have done these sorts of records. Those who are diehards of strong guitar work should definitely find Axel Rudi Pell a must have in your collection.
www.spv.de

**Rei Nishimoto**

## Impellitteri
***"Pedal To The Metal"***
**(SPV)**

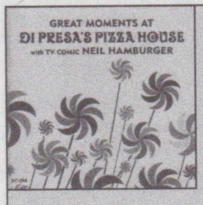
Guitar virtuoso Chris Impellitteri made a career at making records full of ripping solos and massive guitar parts that made all guitar freaks hysterical. But on Pedal To The Metal, he changed his sound a bit but stepping away from this staple sound. He toned down the solos a bit and attempted to add a modern twist to his sound, borrowing from the current wave of Swedish metal and even a slight modern American metal influence as well. But unlike the switch sing/scream combo vocalists these modern acts employ, Impelliterri chose former Speak No Evil frontman Curtis Skeleton, who comes from a hard rock background and at times seems out of his element on these songs. Songs like "Kingdom of Titus (Tribute)," his vocal style may sound a bit unusual for this style of music, where screaming is non-existent, where it has become a regular part of that sound. Even songs like "Crushing Daze," they mix up a Slipknot-esque intro with a progressive keyboard element to give it a cool mixture. The only question here is whether Impelliterri's fans will be open minded enough to give this a chance. Plus if nu-jack fans will be adventurous enough to explore something outside of what is familiar to them.
www.spv.de

**Rei Nishimoto**

## Mestizo
***"LifeLikeMovie"***
**(Galapagos4)**

It takes a certain kind of hip hop listener to enjoy this album entirely. At times, the main focus is the lyrical content, making some songs stay on the same beat without a break in vocal verse, otherwise known as a chorus. Although the same vocal melody is used for a lot of the album, there is a diversity of dimension and production throughout. "Empty Shelliton" showcases an unbreakable freestyle layered with simple beats and sounds that seem to bounce around in three dimensions while "When The Cameras Off" has both vocal speed and a catchy chorus. And intelligent addition to anyone's hip-hop library.
www.galapagos4.com

**Mike Bringman**



## Neil Hamburger
***"Great Moments At Di Presa's Pizza House"***
**(Drag City)**

America's Funnyman has returned with yet another CD of shitty-ass jokes under the guise of a Ken Burn's-esque audio mockumentary about a pizza parlor in California's central valley. "Great Moments At Di Presa's Pizza House" is filled with some jokes from Mr. Hamburger, but the thick of the album is mainly filled with skits surrounding the history between Hamburger and the pizza parlor. Described as Hamburger's "Sgt. Pepper" album; the material on this recording, unlike Hamburger's five previous releases, is relatively difficult to masturbate to while listening.
www.dragcity.com

**Gordon Downs**

## One Umbrella
***"The Solve EP"***
**(Tell-All)**

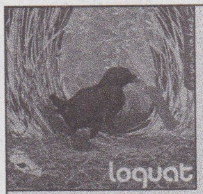
One Umbrella are a Texas-based duo specializing in sampling and tape manipulation. Most of the EP is taken from their previous release, "Consider the Opposite" and sounds like what depressed cowboy robots are listening to on the day the world ends. These older songs seem to be mostly experimentation in finding the tape manipulation/listenability ratio. The songs are good, but they become repetitive. The remaining tracks, especially the EP's closer feature sounds that are more layered and rich.
www.tellallrecords.com

**Dave Tow**

## Magnolia Electric Co.
***"What Comes After the Blues"***
**(Secretly Canadian)**

This is my second foray into the richly textured world of Magnolia Electric Co. and I've got to say that they're probably the best band you're not listening to right now. With broken melodies, haunting guitars and beautiful vocals, "Blues" is nothing short of a masterpiece. On the ridiculously awesome opening track, "At Least the Dark Don't Hide It" Jason Molina croons, "Now death is gonna hold us up in the mirror/ And say we're so much alike we must be brothers/ See I had a job to do, but people like you been doing it for me" you can't help but get stoked. There's probably not a better Americana/folk band playing right now and the fact that you're not listening to these guys makes me want to puke.
www.magnoliaelectricco.com

**Brian Greenaway**



## Loquat
***"It's Yours to Keep"***
**(Jackpine Social Club)**

If this debut album is any sign, Loquat will be huge. This San Francisco band has truly mastered the art of the arrangement. Clean and acoustic guitars, tiptoeing drums and warm keys shuffle in and out amongst occasional electronic textures. Kylee Swenson's vocals are clean and intimate, breaking up nicely when pushed, imagine a mix of Suzanne Vega with Dolores O'Riordan without the latter's histrionics. An admirable air of restraint permeates throughout. This is one of those "everything just right" albums. For mellow indie rock, it's hard to top this.
www.loquatmusic.com

**Cosmo Lee**

## Various Artists
***"The Power of Music"***
**(Underground Operations)**

"The Power of Music" is two discs with 40 songs ranging through punk, hardcore, indie, ska, hardcore and everything in between from Canada's biggest names in the genres. All proceeds from the sale go to the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, which is currently struggling financially (ironic?). The first disc explodes out with Belvedere screaming "fuck you" and it doesn't slow down from there. Dead Letter Dept., The Matadors, The Weakerthans (with a song that is on "Reconstruction Site"), Death From Above 1979, Brat Attack, Moneen and a horde of others lend their voices to help make poverty end in Ontario. This is the mini Live 8 production done the Canadian way. For 40 songs that are solid all the way through, this is easily worth the money. Plus your few bucks is going toward a good cause. How often do you get to buy a great CD (let alone two great CD's) and contribute to groceries for a single mom with three kids and a 300 square foot apartment? Check out Wheels On The Bus ("One More Reason"), Choke ("Breathing Won't Come Easy") and Death From Above 1979 ("Go Home, Get Down"). They are reason enough to pick this up.
www.undergroundoperations.com

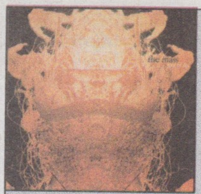
**Pete Sorer**

## Settlefish
***"The Plural of the Choir"***
**(Deep Elm)**

This sounds a lot like older Modest Mouse, (producer Brian Deck also collaborated on MM's "The Moon and Antarctica"). Settlefish's rollicking, herky-jerky "Barnacle Beach" sounds so much like "3rd Planet" I'm hoping Isaac Brock never gets wind of this project. Still, "Choir" is an interesting effort, full of challenging sounds and open-ended imagery, almost daring one to keep listening. The majority of the album is made up of quick tempo changes and vocals that drop from high to low, keeping things interesting throughout. A sense of paranoia also abounds within Settlefish's songs, never allowing one to get too comfortable but always keeping attuned to what's going on.
www.settlefish.com

**Brian Greenaway**

## The Mass



***"City of Dis"***

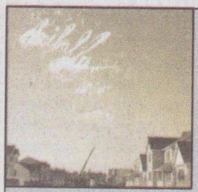
**(Crucial Blast)**

If John Zorn worked with Converge, it might sound like this. The Mass don't fit into any genre, but are best (and always) described by comparison to The Dillinger Escape Plan, Fantomas, Mr. Bungle – you get the picture. What sets the Mass apart are (a) saxophone, and (b) a willingness to play straight-up, horns-in-the-air metal, if only for seconds at a time. This Oakland-based band is less vocal-oriented than their peers (but where there are vocals, they are varied and effective). Thus, instrumentation takes center stage. In addition to the requisite art-skronk freakouts, there are intriguing composed passages and moments of introspection. In a world filled with musical conformity, "City of Dis" is a refreshingly challenging listen.

www.themass.us

**Cosmo Lee**

## Decibully



***"Sing Out America!"***

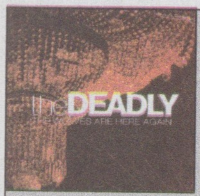
**(Polyvinyl)**

Perhaps appropriate to their home state of Wisconsin, Decibully's sound is one of quiet Midwestern modesty. The Milwaukee septet's third release, "Sing Out America" is a hodgepodge of Midwestern sounds and styles, with a mix made up of banjos, keys, vocals, steel guitars, a variety of drums and more. It's a record filled with many different textures, including the hazy opener, "I'm Gonna Tell You", the banjo-fueled back porch stomper "Megan & Magi", the late-Beulah-esque, vaguely alt-country "Rid Of Me At Last", the mid tempo rocker "Sing Out! Sing Out!" and the ill advised a capella "Temptation." Things are so varied that each track almost feels like a different band, which, while it keeps the record form getting dull, also gets a bit frustrating. While some of the songs have their moments of near greatness (particularly the first five tracks) "Sing Out America" tends to drag a bit in its second half. It's almost as though Decibully had too many ideas to choose from, and rather than just refine a few things to perfection, they threw everything into a pot and pulled out an unfocused mishmash.

www.polyvinylrecords.com

**Aaron Passman**

## The Deadly




***"The Wolves Are Here Again"***

**(Pluto)**

Hailing from Philthadelphia, The Deadly are made up of members previously in the kick-ass hardcore band Turmoil. A bit different in their brand of heavy, but equally off the charts on the insanity front, the band's latest full length, "The Wolves Are Here Again" chugs along quite nicely, and brings to mind such old-school spazzy hardcore bands that made music great, such as Swing Kids, Honeywell, The Swarm or JR Ewing.

www.thedeadly.com

**Derek Meier**

## Until The End

***"The Blind Leading The Lost"***

**(Eulogy)**

Hatebreed called. They want their dignity back. Just kidding! While it's pretty obvious that Until The End haven't got much else in their personal CD collections other than some Voorhees and whatever Jamey Jasta's rested his testicles on, The Blind Leading The Lost is still a searing hot dose of new hardcore hatred. Even if it is everything you've come to expect: from the detuned, chunky guitars and sludgy breakdowns to the singer who seems to have smoked a carton of Camels before laying down vocals. You can still hear the passion and malicious intent these guys have though...and that's what saves them. No, they're not entirely original. But they're certainly passionate.

www.eulogyrecordings.com

**Keith Carman**

## Sons of Otis

***"X"***

**(Small Stone)**

With bands like Sea of Green and Puddy, Toronto is quickly becoming known for its sludgy stoner rock scene. Sons of Otis play a sludgy brand of rock that is reminiscent of bands like Kyuss and Sabbath mixed with the flavor of the Melvins. Their main weapon of choice being powerful bludgeoning rhythms, Sons of Otis assaults and punishes listeners with a maniacal glee. This masterpiece has seven tracks weighing in at just over 50 minutes.

www.smallstone.com

**James Wright**

## The Charming Snakes

***"Ammunition"***

**(Dirtnap)**

Ok, I've really been back and forth about this album. At first I was completely thrown for a loop when I listened to this CD. This is not what I expected from one of my favorite labels, Dirtnap, which has graced the world with such legendary punk bands as The Exploding Hearts, the Spits, and Sweet J.A.P. The Charming Snakes definitely does not fall in line with any of the aforementioned bands, but I guess sometimes change is good. The CS plays gritty, distorted garage punk, along the lines of Coachwhips or The Witnesses. Not as speedy and chaotic as the former, or as bluesy as the latter, but The Charming Snakes certainly holds its own. This band has Swami Records written all over it. John Reis take note. All the key elements are here – fuzzy vocals, tambourine, even an instrumental jazzy attack with saxophone ("Epic Jams"). A catchy, toe tapping album that's far from ground breaking, but keeps things short and sweet so your not tired of them by the time the CDs over.

www.charmingsnakes.com

**Tyler Moazed**

## Numbers

***"Life Mind Time"***

**(Wasabi)**

San Francisco based trio Numbers are due to break like a pregnant woman's water! This import contains much of what we all need more of: fresh tracks from Numbers. With keyboards, drums and drum machines, vocalist/percussionist Indra makes for a new kind of rock heroine. One that may or may not ability to slam-dunk a basketball? She's tall. And hot! Their full length on Kill Rock Stars will be out soon, so keep your shit together. However, until then try to grab a copy of this "gem-of-an-import" and dance your bad vibes away you goddamn freak!

www.numbersmusic.com

**Gordon Downs**

## Awol One & Daddy Kev

***"Killafornia"***

**(Alpha Pup)**

For Shapeshifter Awol One to release an album with just five tracks, every song better be fucking spectacular. With his dragging hoarse voice, Awol One rambles on about things that may seem very interesting to him in his own world, but leaves anyone else listening flat out puzzled. There's hardly an inkling of storytelling here; Awol One really needs to work on his choruses, some of which are duller than a Catholic sermon. "Re-birth," an earlier Daddy Kev and Awol album, was very well put together and had some unique themes at its core. "Killafornia" just plods along... while Daddy Kev provides a nice funk rock sound on tracks like "Unlucky Number," Awol's flow just brings it down with amateurish words, making it clear that his biggest problem is that he doesn't know if he wants to be considered a serious emcee or just a jokester.

www.awolone.com

**Tyson**

## Shelby

***"The Luxury of Time"***

**(Gigantic Music)**

This is the epitome of "old dude" indie rock. The music is made for hip 30-somethings who live in Williamsburg and want to rock out but think most current underground music is just too loud. The band's sound is a mishmash of indie pop melodies, spacey keyboards breaks, soft intelligent lyrics and more production value than you can shake a stick at. The two guys who make up Shelby, Kenny Cummings and Phil Schuster, have worked with such bands as Mercury Rev, Blonde Redhead and The Fall's Mark E. Smith. Throw in some Radiohead and you'll understand where the music is coming from. I wouldn't say "Luxury of Time" is necessarily a bad album per se, it's just really forgettable. After my first listen I honestly couldn't remember a single song – they just all blended together. Never once did I want to go back and listen to a specific track again. These guys will probably get mad love from college radio and play sweet indie dork festivals, but mark my words: two years from now NO ONE will remember this band.

www.shelbynyc.com

**Tyler Moazed**

## Various Artists

***"NBA 2K6: The Tracks"***

**(Decon)**

Videogame music soundtracks fall into two simple categories; good song choices, and bad song choices. Not to mention, the game actually has to be worth its fucking weight to even be considered as having a good soundtrack (games like Def Jam Vendetta or NBA Street come to mind). NBA 2K6 is now included in that short list, as both the game (reviewed in this issue) and the soundtrack are excellent. Expect to be disappointed if you hoped this soundtrack would have shit like Snoop or Lil John; instead, 2K6 includes real fucking artists, like The Roots, Jean Grae, Aesop Rock, Aceyalone, Redman and a handful of others. There is also an upcoming tour (headlined by The Roots) in support of this soundtrack which, if you've never personally witnessed Black Thought, ?uestlove and the rest of the crew on stage, you should. Them and the rest of the artists mentioned above make sitting thru the 2K6 menu's much more bearable.

www.2ksports.com/bounce

**Paul Richter**

## {un}known

***"Vol. 1"***

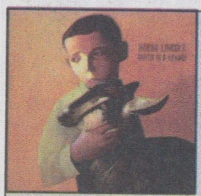
**(Double Blind)**

A compilation album of unreleased material by rising stars like Hopesfall, Boys Night Out, The Revolution Smile Project 86 and He Is Legend, this CD acts as an introduction to the underground. The live version of Hopesfall's "The Ones" is worth the price of admission alone. Having just seen them live at this year's edition of the Warped Tour, I will go on record and state that Hopesfall is undoubtedly the most underrated band on the scene today. Besides that, He Is Legend's "The Seduction" is a rawk 'n' excursion everyone should experience and Boys Night Out's "Where We Breathe" will make all the emo kids swoon. This is a worthy compilation.

www.doubleblindmusic.com

**James Wright**

## North Lincoln



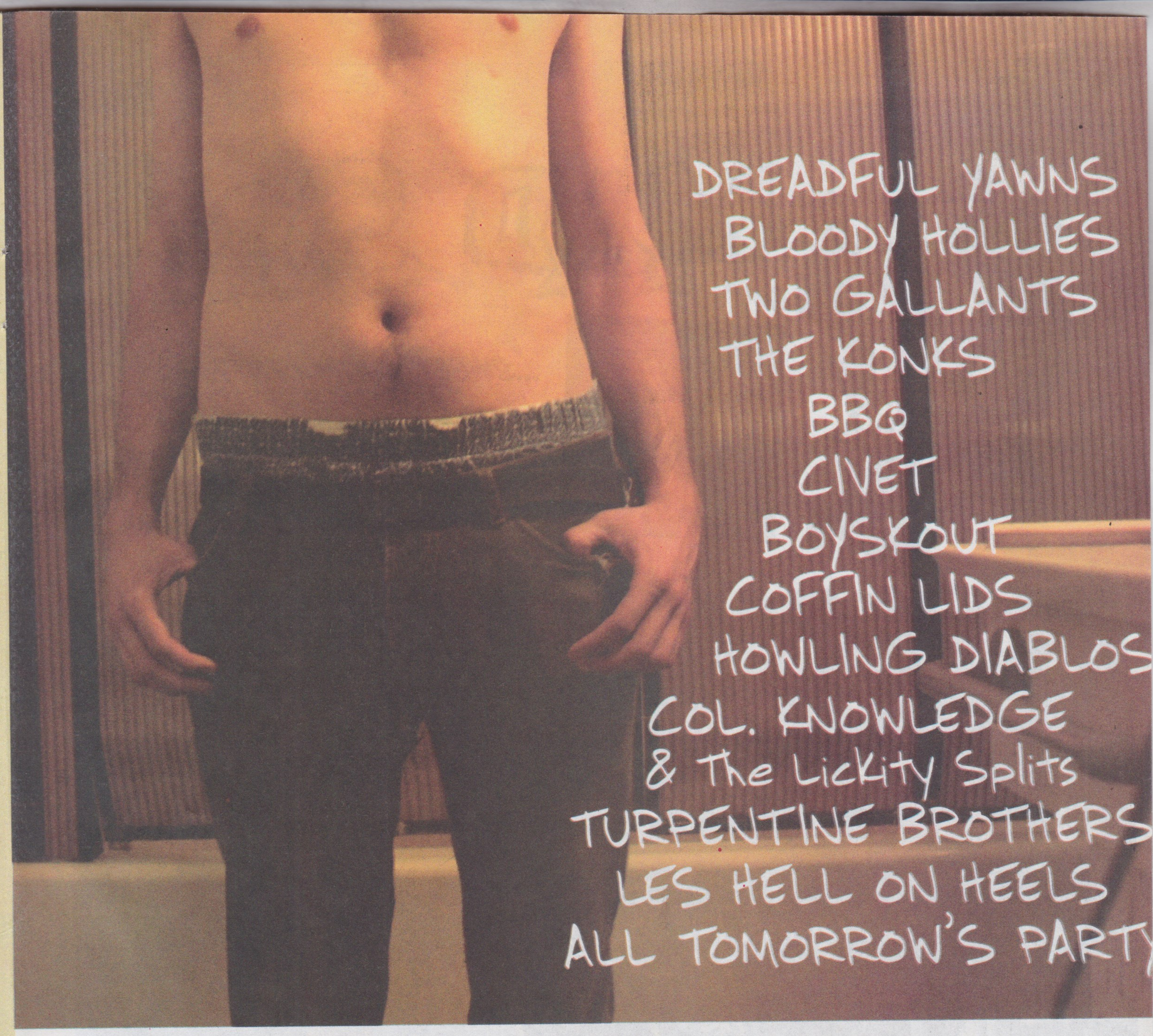
***"Truth Is A Menace"***

**(No Idea)**

A fusion of charging punk rock riffs and poppy vocal hooks. While they will undoubtedly draw comparisons from the likes of Hot Water Music, North Lincoln do manage to come into their own on songs like "Saint Rogue Red" and the booze swigging of "Who's Counting Anyway?" This is an all around solid effort from star too finish that will leave you craving more. Remember when bands combining pop/punk were good? Remember the glory days of bands like NOFX, 88 Fingers Louie? Then you'll love North Lincoln.

www.northlincoln.cjb.net

**James Wright**

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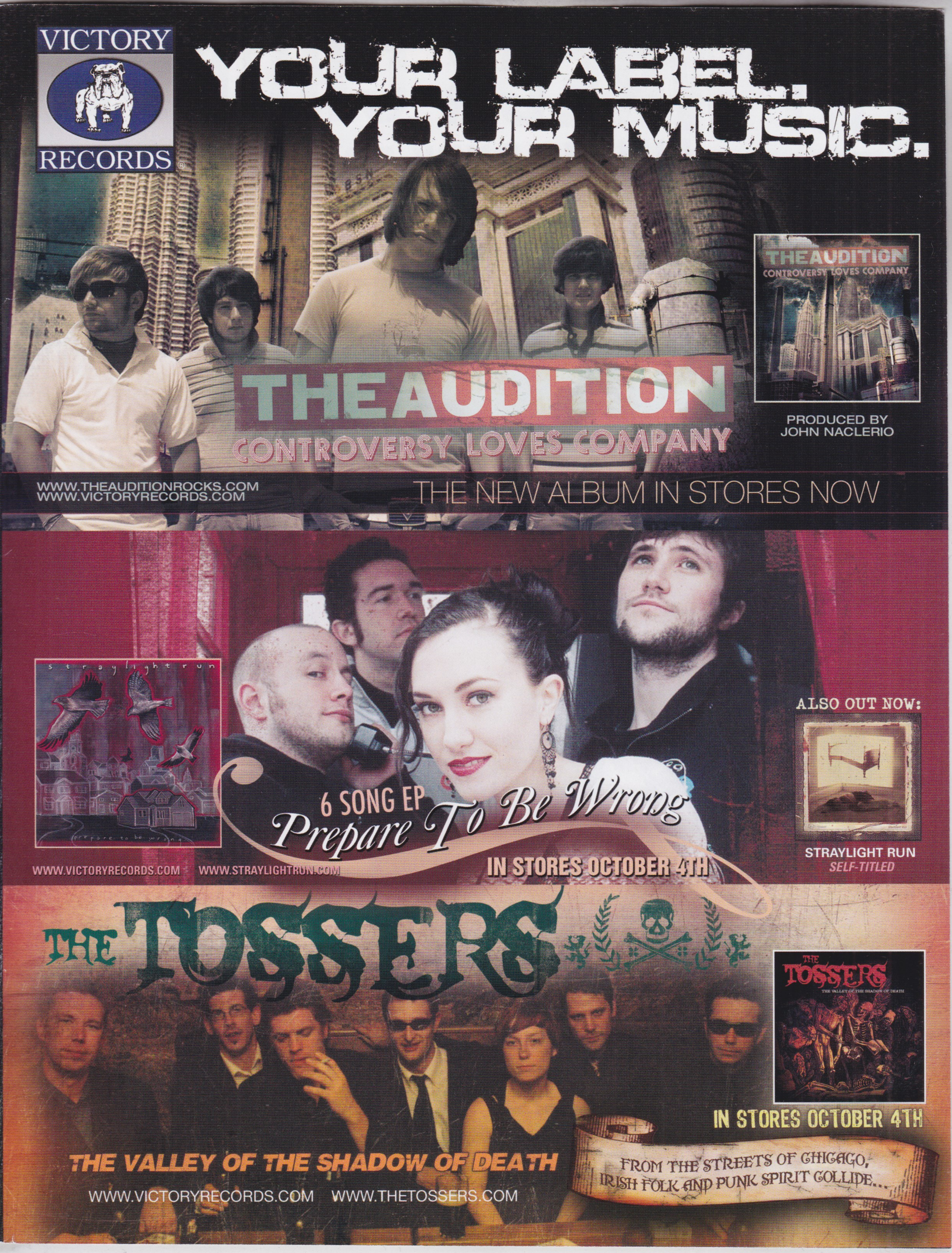
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